THE CHEKA

LENIN'S POLITICAL POLICE

GEORGE LEGGETT

THE CHEKA: LENIN'S POLITICAL POLICE

FOR Review

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THE CHEKA:
LENIN'S POLITICAL POLICE

The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission
for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage
(December 1917 to February 1922)

by

George Leggett

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To Robert Slusser,
inspirer of this study

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Preface to the First Edition

Until very recently there was no substantial critical study, in any language, of the first Soviet political police organisation—the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Speculation, Sabotage, and Misuse of Authority, colloquially known as the Vecheka or Cheka. Attempting to remedy that omission, the present work took as its point of departure the indispensable pioneering studies written respectively by E. J. Scott, whose monograph, *The Cheka,* issued in 1953 as a paper of St. Antony's College, Oxford, was published in 1956, and by Robert M. Slusser, whose richly documented survey of the Cheka and its successor organisations appeared in 1957 as the first chapter of the book, *The Soviet Secret Police*, edited by him jointly with Simon Wolin. There had already existed a considerable, if dispersed, amount of pertinent information in contemporary Soviet and émigré publications, especially in the writings on the Cheka and on its founder, Felix Dzerzhinsky, by the latter's lieutenants, Peters and Latsis; invaluable, too, were the short-lived *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin (Ezhenedelnik VChK,* 1918*)* and *The Red Book of the Vecheka, (Krasnaia kniga VChK,* 1920*)* rare copies of which are held at the Hoover Institution, Stanford. An important source has been the contemporary Soviet press, particularly *Izvestia*, widely utilised in Ernest V. Hollis's unsubmitted doctoral dissertation, 'Police Systems of Imperial and Soviet Russia', 1957, lodged in the Archive of Russian and East European History and Culture, Columbia University. But the decisive factor, making possible a detailed study of the Vecheka, has been the major release of Soviet material on the subject in the course of a sustained post-Stalin campaign of glorification of that police agency; especially useful have been the collection of documents entitled *Iz istorii VchK* (1958), P. G. Sofinov's historical survey, *Ocherki istorii VChK* (1960), and biographies of Dzerzhinsky by A. Khatskevich, N. Zubov, and A. V. Tishkov. Significantly, two recent Soviet publications in this genre, *V. I. Lenin i VChK* (1975), and yet another biography of Dzerzhinsky (1977), both *Politizdat* productions, were edited under the direction of S. K. Tsvigun, First Deputy Chairman of the Committee of State Security, the KGB.

The time had therefore come for a full-length history of the Vecheka to be essayed, even though definitive treatment still cannot

be achieved so long as the relevant Soviet archives remain closed to outside scrutiny. Two such studies were undertaken: mine and that by Professor Lennard Gerson, whose lucid and informative volume, *The Secret Police in Lenin's Russia* (published in Philadelphia in 1976), constitutes a notable breakthrough in a hitherto neglected but important field of Soviet history. Fortunately, in spite of inevitable overlapping, the two studies are to some extent complementary: Professor Gerson's book covers a wider period and draws on some different sources, whilst mine, concentrating at greater length on a shorter period, places more emphasis on such aspects as the genesis of the Vecheka, its Leninist roots, and the significant part played in its early history by the Left Socialist Revolutionaries.

The necessary research for this study could not have been carried out without assistance from the courteous staff of the British Library of Political and Economic Science at the London School of Economics and Political Science, of the British Library at the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Université de Paris. Infinitely helpful were Mr. Lev Magerovsky, Curator of the Archive of Russian and East European History and Culture, Columbia University, and the staff of the Library and Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, at Stanford University. A generous grant from the Astor Foundation made possible a stimulating research visit to the Hoover Institution, whose hospitable Associate Director, the late Professor Witold Sworakowski, facilitated access to the finest collection, outside the USSR, of archival and printed information on the Bolshevik Revolution era. I am much indebted to Mrs. Marina Tinkoff (now Mrs. Utechin) and to Mrs. Arline Paul of the Hoover Library for their gracious guidance, and, especially, to Mme. A. M. Bourguina, learned Curator of the B. I. Nicolaevsky Archive, for her ready advice, unstinted help, and indefatigable pursuit of rare materials; without her enthusiastic co-operation, this would have been a poorer book. Another generous and hospitable benefactor on the Stanford scene was Edward Ellis Smith, historian of the Okhrana and of Stalin's early years, who kindly permitted exploitation of his useful card-indices.

A beneficent mentor in the present project has been the doyen of Western studies on the Soviet political police, Professor Robert M. Slusser of Michigan State University, whose 1957 survey of the subject has been my constant *vademecum*, and who has liberally given of his time, his learning, his encouragement, as well as of his materials. He has also read and commented on a major part of my

manuscript. I am immeasurably grateful to him for his scholarship and his altruism. Another considerable expert on Soviet affairs, Raymond Rocca of Falls Church, Virginia, has made available publications difficult of access. I thank him most warmly for his unswerving support and generosity of spirit.

A number of other scholars in the Soviet field have helped with advice and expertise; they cannot all be mentioned here, but special thanks are due to Natalie Grant of Virginia, to Dr. Harold Shukman of St. Antony's College, Oxford, and to Dr. John Bradley of Manchester University. I am also deeply indebted to the incomparable and much mourned Max Hayward of St. Antony's College and to Leopold Labedz, erudite editor of *Survey*, for reading my manuscript and helping it on its way to publication.

I wish to express my gratitude to members of the Oxford University Press editorial staff for their forbearance and kindness, and especially to Mr. Ivon Asquith, to Miss Benita Stoney, and to Mrs. Elaine Koss for her patience and skill in dealing with an intractable manuscript; the printer, too, deserves high commendation in this context.

Above all I am beholden to Leonard Schapiro, Professor Emeritus at the London School of Economics and Political Science, who watched over this work from its inception, through years of traumatic gestation. His great learning, wise counsel, practical help, and heartening encouragement in difficult times were vital to the realisation of the project, for the ultimate shortcomings of which, however, I alone stand responsible.

Finally, I thank my wife Rani and my son Richard for their angelic patience and unfailing moral support.

G.L.

Barnes
February 1981

Preface to the Paperback Edition

The publication of this study in paperback provides an opportunity to introduce corrections and improvements, to add information, and to update the epilogue. Where additional sources have been used, these have been listed in an annexe after the bibliography, or else inserted in the bibliography itself.

Very little new material of importance bearing on the Vecheka has been published in the interim; in the USSR the emphasis has been on

Chekists of a later vintage, in the context of celebrating the fortieth anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War. Nevertheless the cult of Dzerzhinsky (one of the few leading Bolsheviks of the Lenin era available for canonisation) and his political police continues. Since Stalin's demise, rehabilitation has been accorded to many prominent Old Chekists who perished in the wholesale massacre of the NKVD leadership in the purges, but not to their victims in the suppressed socialist opposition parties, nor to those of Lenin's Old Bolshevik colleagues who, like Bukharin, were eliminated in the show trials. Whilst extolling revolutionary terror under Lenin (without of course dwelling on it in detail), the post-Stalin régime has not made any public admission regarding the extent of the Stalin terror, even Khrushchev's secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress, condemning Stalin's repression of the Party's élite, but passing over in silence the fate of unnumbered millions who died in the Gulag or the execution cellar, has not seen publication in the USSR.

As Edward Crankshaw put it: 'The Soviet Union is the only country in the Old World which has not begun to escape from its past by admitting to past crimes.'* For its survival, the régime requires the myth enveloping Lenin's revolution, and the mystique of the Party's infallibility, these being the chief sources of its legitimacy and authority. It operates on the principle that whoever controls the past, controls the present. For the Soviet régime to come to terms with its deeply disturbing past would mean shaking its own foundations, denying its *raison d'être*. And so the past has to be rewritten, and myth substituted for history.

G.L.

Barnes,
January 1986

* Edward Crankshaw, *Putting up with the Russians 1947–1984*, London, 1984, p. 157.

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Foreword

The system of transliteration adopted here is that of the Library of Congress, with a few modifications; diacritical marks are omitted, and spellings of the better-known proper names follow a more familiar usage: thus Felix Dzerzhinsky not Feliks Dzerzhinskii (nor, as in his native Polish language, Dzierżyński), Maxim Gorky not Maksim Gorkii, Trotsky not Trotskii, Zinoviev not Zinov'ev. Similarly with some names of non-Russian origin: Kronstadt is preferred to Kronshtadt, and Mandelstam to Mandelshtam. However, the regular Library of Congress transliteration of proper names is retained (except for diacritical marks) in source references and in the Bibliography.

Where events in Russia occur before 1 February 1918, they are dated according to the Julian (Old Style) calendar then observed in Russia, which in the nineteenth century ran twelve days, and in the twentieth century thirteen days, behind the Gregorian (New Style) calendar in use in Western Europe. Occasionally the Gregorian date follows the Julian date in brackets, e.g. 25 October (7 November) 1917. The change-over in Russia to the Western calendar occurred on the day following 31 January 1918 (O.S.), which was declared to be 14 February (N.S.).

The particular Soviet edition of Lenin's collected works that is referred to in any source reference is indicated in brackets: thus Lenin (5), Vol. XIX, p. 10. The 5th edition is by far the fullest, but the *apparatus criticus* of the 2nd/3rd edition contains many valuable editorial notes omitted from later editions. Different editions of the Large Soviet Encyclopedia are similarly indicated, e.g. *BSE*(3), Vol. V, p. 120.

Except where an author has more than one work to his credit in the Bibliography (in which case *the date* of the work cited is included in source references for purposes of identification), source references normally give only the author's surname and the page number of the work cited; the title of the work, with date and place of publication, figures in the Bibliography. Throughout, emphases appearing in all quoted passages are as in the original text.

The term 'political police' is preferred to 'secret police', both because to a marked extent the Vecheka and its branches operated openly, as is clear from the Chekas' frequent use of the Soviet press,

and because the Vecheka's main function was a political security one, as is indeed indicated by the title adopted by its direct successor, the State Political Administration, i.e. the GPU. In the interests of precision and brevity, the original Russian names of Soviet institutions, sometimes in abbreviated form, are often conveniently employed (except on first mention) in place of their English translations: for instance Sovnarkom instead of Council of People's Commissars, and NKIu instead of People's Commissariat for Justice. All such Russian terms and abbreviations figure in the glossary.

Upon first mention of any identifiable Chekist, his/her full names and dates of birth and death (where known) are given in the notes, which also direct the reader, where applicable, to biographical summaries in Appendix B, or to Chapter XII where fuller biographical treatment is accorded to several prominent Chekists.

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

ARA		American Relief Administration
Arkhiv IML	see under TsPA IML	
Cheka, ChK	Chrezvychainaia Komissiia	Extraordinary Commission
CHON	Chasti Osobogo Naznacheniia	Detachments of Special Purpose (Party military formations)
Chrezvychaika	Chrezvychainaia Komissiia	Extraordinary Commission
Glavkomtrud	Glavnyi Komitet po Vseobshchei Trudovoi Povinnosti	Main Committee for Universal Labour Conscription
Goskontrol	Komissariat Gosudarstvennogo Kontrolia	Commissariat for State Control
GPU	Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie	State Political Administration
Gub-Cheka	Gubernskaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiia	Provincial Extraordinary Commission
Guberniia		Province
Gubispolkom	Gubernskii Ispolnitelnyi Komitet	Provincial (Soviet) Executive Committee
GUM	Glavnoe Upravlenie Militsii	Chief Administration of the Militia
GUMZ	Glavnoe Upravlenie Mestami Zakliucheniia	Chief Administration of Places of Detention
GUPO	Glavnoe Upravlenie Pogranichnoi Okhrany	Chief Administration of the Frontier Guard
GUPR	Glavnoe Upravlenie Prinuditelnykh Rabot	Chief Administration of Forced Labour
INO	Inostrannyi Otdel	Foreign (Intelligence) Department (of Vecheka, GPU, etc.)
Inogorodnii Otdel		Territorial Liaison Department (literally 'Other City Department') of Vecheka or local Cheka
Ispolkom	Ispolnitelnyi Komitet	Executive Committee
Kadet	Konstitutsionnyi Demokrat	Constitutional Democrat (i.e. liberal)

Katorga		Penal Servitude
Kollegiia		Collegium (i.e. Executive Board)
Kombedy	Komitety Bednoty	Committees of Poor Peasants
Kontrolno-Revizionnaia Komissiia		Supervision and Inspection Commission
Krai		Territory
KRO	Kontr-Razvedyvatelnyi Otdel	Counter-Espionage Department
Kulak		prosperous peasant
LSR	Levyi Sotsial-Revoliutsioner	Left Socialist Revolutionary
M-Cheka	Moskovskaia Cheka	Moscow Cheka
MRC	Voenno-Revoliutsionnyi Komitet	Military Revolutionary Committee
Narkomfin	Narodnyi Komissariat Finansov	People's Commissariat for Finance
Narkomprod	Narodnyi Komissariat Prodovolstviia	People's Commissariat for Food Supply
Narkomvneshtorg	Narodnyi Komissariat Vneshnei Torgovli	People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade
NEP	Novaia Ekonomicheskaia Politika	New Economic Policy
NKID	Narodnyi Komissariat Inostrannykh Del	People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs
NKIu	Narodnyi Komissariat Iustitsii	People's Commissariat for Justice
NKPS	Narodnyi Komissariat Putei Soobshcheniia	People's Commissariat for Communications
NKVD	Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennykh Del	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
n.s.c.		no source cited
NSZRiS	Narodnyi Soiuz Zashchity Rodiny i Svobody	People's Union for Defence of Country and Freedom
Oblast		Region
OGPU	Obedinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie	Unified State Political Administration
Okrug		Region, (Military) District
OO	Osobyi Otdel	Special Department (of Cheka, for Military Counter-Espionage and Security)

Osobmezhkom	Osobaia Mezhduvedomstvennaia Komissiia (pri VChK)	Special Inter-departmental Commission (of the Vecheka)
Osoboe Soveshchanie		Special Board, Special Conference
Osobyi Otdel	see under OO	
Otdel		Department
Otdelenie		Section
Otriad		Detachment
Podotdel		Sub-Department, Section
Pogran-Okhrana	Pogranichnaia Okhrana	Frontier Guard Service
Politbiuro	Politicheskoe Biuro	Political Bureau (Politburo) of (a) Central Committee of Communist Party, or of (b) District Militia Administration
Postoiannoe Soveshchanie		Standing Conference
Prestuplenie po Dolzhnosti		Misconduct in Office; Misuse of Authority
Prodovolstvennyi Otriad		Food (Requisitioning) Detachment
Prodrazverstka		System of food requisitioning
PUR	Politicheskoe Upravlenie Revvoensoveta	Political Administration of the Revolutionary War Council
Rabkrin (RKI)	Raboche-Krestianskaia Inspektsiia (Narodnyi Komissariat Rabochei i Krestianskoi Inspektsii)	Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection)
Raion		Area
Revkom	Revoliutsionnyi Komitet	Revolutionary Committee
Revvoensovet	Revoliutsionnyi Voennyi Sovet	Revolutionary War Council
RKP(b)	Rossiiskaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (bolshevikov)	Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
RSDRP(b)	Rossiiskaia Sotsial-Demokraticheskaia Rabochaia Partiia (bolshevikov)	Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks)

RSFSR	Rossiiskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Federativnaia Sovetskaia Respublika	Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic
RTChK	Raionnaia Transportnaia Cheka	Area Transport Cheka
SDKPiL	Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy	Social Democractic Party of (the Kingdom of) Poland and Lithuania
SOR	Soiuz Osvobozhdeniia Rossii	Union for the Liberation of Russia
Sovnarkom	Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov	Council of People's Commissars
SR	Sotsial-Revoliutsioner	Socialist Revolutionary
SRKO	Sovet Rabochei i Krestianskoi Oborony	Workers' and Peasants' Defence Council
SSSR	Soiuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
STO	Sovet Truda i Oborony	Council of Labour and Defence
SUR	Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva	Collected Statutes and Decrees of the Workers' and Peasants' Government
SVR	Soiuz Vozrozhdeniia Rossii	Union for the Regeneration of Russia
SZRiS	Soiuz Zashchity Rodiny i Svobody	Union for the Defence of Country and Freedom
TChK	Transportnaia Cheka	Transport Cheka
TLD	(Inogorodnii Otdel, q.v.)	Territorial Liaison Department of Vecheka or local Cheka
Tsentroplenbezh	Tsentralnaia Kollegiia po delam plennykh i bezhentsev	Central Collegium for Prisoners of War and Refugees
TsGAOR	Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Oktiabrskoi Revoliutsii i Sotsialisticheskogo Stroitelstva SSSR	Central State Archive of the October Revolution and of Socialist Construction of the USSR
TsGASA	Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sovetskoi Armii	Central State Archive of the Soviet Army
TsIK	Tsentralnyi Ispolnitelnyi Komitet	Central Executive Committee

TsPA IML	Tsentralnyi Partiinyi Arkhiv Instituta Marksizma i Leninizma pri TsK KPSS	Central Party Archive of the Institute of Marxism and Leninism attached to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Tsuprchrezkom	Tsentralnoe Upravlenie Chrezvychainykh Komissii Ukrainy	Central Administration of Extraordinary Commissions of the Ukraine (i.e. Ukrainian Cheka)
Uchastok		Sector
Uezd		District
Upravlenie		Administration, Directorate
Vecheka	Vserossiiskaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiia (po borbe s Kontrrevoliutsiei, Spekuliatsiei, Sabotazhem i Prestupleniiami po Dolzhnosti)	All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (for Combating Counter-Revolution, Speculation, Sabotage, and Misconduct in Office)
Vesenkha	see under VSNKh	
Vikzhel	Vserossiiskii Ispolnitelnyi Komitet Soiuza Zheleznodorozhnikov	All-Russian Executive Committee of the Union of Railwaymen
VKP(b)	Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (bolshevikov)	All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
VNUS	Voiska Vnutrennei Sluzhby	Internal Service Troops
Voenkontrol	Voennyi Kontrol	Military Counter-Espionage
VOKhR	Voiska Vnutrennei Okhrany Respubliki	Troops of Internal Security of the Republic
Volost		(Small) Rural District
VRiKP	Vremennoe Rabochee i Krestianskoe Pravitelstvo	Provisional Government of Workers and Peasants
VRK	Voenno-Revoliutsionnyi Komitet	Military Revolutionary Committee
Vsechrezkom	Vserossiiskaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiia	All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (i.e. Vecheka)
Vseobuch	Vseobshchee Voennoe Obuchenie	Universal Military Training
VSNKh	Vysshyi Sovet Narodnogo Khoziaistva	Supreme Council of National Economy
VTsIK	Vserossiiskii Tsentralnyi Ispolnitelnyi Komitet	All-Russian Central Executive Committee (of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets)

VU-Cheka	Vseukrainskaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiia	All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission
Zagraditelnyi Otriad		(Food Confiscation) Cordon Detachment

Prologue

> It is self-evident that these *conspirateurs* do not limit themselves to the mere task of organising the proletariat; not at all. Their business lies precisely in trying to pre-empt the developing revolutionary process, drive it artificially to crisis, to create a revolution *ex nihilo*, to make a revolution without the conditions of a revolution. For them, the only necessary condition for a revolution is an adequate organisation of their conspiracy. They are the alchemists of the revolution.
>
> Karl Marx (1850), quoted by Shlomo Avineri,
> *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*,
> Cambridge, 1968, p. 201

> Give us an organisation of revolutionaries—and we will overturn the whole of Russia.
>
> Lenin, *What is to be Done?* (1902)
> (Lenin (5), Vol. VI, p. 127)

One of the first actions of the liberal democratic Provisional Government upon assuming office in the Revolution of February 1917 was to abolish the Department of Police along with the gendarmerie and the entire 'Okhrana' security system—hated symbols of Tsarist political oppression. By ironic contrast, a bare six weeks after he had seized power from the Provisional Government in the October *coup d'état*, Lenin—the Social Democratic revolutionary—resurrected the political police in the shape of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage.[1] This institution, commonly called Vecheka (VChK) or Cheka (ChK)[2] after the initial letters of its abbreviated Russian title, was established in Petrograd on 7 (20) December 1917,[3] and was destined to be the precursor of a succession of formidable Soviet political police organisations ranging via the GPU, OGPU, NKVD, etc., down to today's KGB.

The question immediately poses itself: How did Lenin, the self-appointed Marxist Messiah, come to create the Vecheka? Was this a premeditated act, integral to Lenin's doctrine? Or the chance product of random circumstance? Or, maybe, the unforeseen but logical, perhaps inevitable, consequence of the impact of Lenin's policy and practice upon the intractable situation confronting him? To elucidate this riddle, and indeed to comprehend the peculiar character of the Cheka, it is necessary to consider, however briefly, Lenin's pre-October views on revolution, on the nature of the state,

and on the role of the police, and also to note the socio-economic and political context in which Lenin attained power and founded the Cheka.

The February Revolution caught Lenin by surprise. Addressing a meeting of young Swiss workers in Zürich on 9 (22) January 1917, he prophesied: 'We should not be deceived by the present graveyard silence in Europe. Europe is pregnant with revolution.' But his speech contained a note of personal resignation: 'We, the old ones, [Lenin was not quite 47] may not live to see the decisive battles of the coming revolution.'[4] Least of all did Lenin expect an imminent revolution in Russia. Several weeks later the Romanov autocracy collapsed without a struggle.

Paradoxically, Lenin's prospects for power were, to all appearances, never at a lower ebb than on the eve of the February Revolution. Lenin dominated the Bolshevik Party, conceived by him as a concentrated, highly disciplined organisation of dedicated revolutionaries, tightly controlled at the apex in conformity with his theory of democratic centralism. But the price paid for the Party's subservience to his will had been its progressive isolation and diminution. Under Lenin's leadership the split in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDRP)[5] in 1903 into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks had been perpetuated at the latter's Prague Conference in January 1912; the united front presented by the Social Democratic alliance in the Duma had been disrupted in December 1913 at Lenin's bidding, and in 1915 came Lenin's irrevocable break with the Second (Socialist) International.

In 1906 the combined RSDRP commanded a membership of 70,000;[6] by January 1917 the now independent Bolshevik Party's officially claimed strength had sunk to 23,600,[7] and indeed a more realistic estimate indicates a reduction to around 10,000 members, or less.[8] This decline was due to such factors as Lenin's constant schismatic feuding within the Social Democratic community, his emphasis on clandestine activity as opposed to fostering a broad working class movement through legal trade union tactics, the counter-attraction of emergent progressive liberal parties like the Constitutional Democrats (*Kadety*), the economic reforms and constitutional concessions reluctantly yielded by the Tsarist autocracy, and, not least, the surge of patriotism occasioned by the outbreak of war. The war, which was to sweep away Tsarist absolutism, fractured the solidarity of the Second (Socialist) International, whose constituent national parties mostly rallied to support the war effort of their respective governments. Lenin's party was conspicuous in its

emphatic, though not unanimous, repudiation of the war. The Tsarist authorities took the precaution of committing the Bolshevik leadership within Russia to prison or Siberian exile, leaving the party in disarray.[9] At the beginning of 1917 Bolshevik numbers and influence were negligible.[10]

The February Revolution was an unplanned, anonymous manifestation in which the revolutionaries had no hand. It was the spontaneous mutiny of a war-weary people rebelling against the patent misrule of a weak and dispirited régime. The revolt was sparked off by the protest of hungry housewives queuing for bread in Petrograd, followed by a mass strike of industrial workers, whose total number in the city stood in the region of 400,000. There was no political conspiracy—no prominent revolutionaries of any party were at large in the capital at the critical time. Most of the surviving members of the Bolshevik Party's Petrograd Committee were arrested on the morning of 26 February; the security measures taken by the Okhrana were impeccable.[11]

This political police apparatus, whose foundations had been laid in 1880 with the creation of the Department of State Police in place of the inadequate Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery, functioned under the Ministry of the Interior; it consisted, centrally, of the Special Department (*Osobyi Otdel*) of the Department of Police (*Departament Politsii*) and, territorially, of a network of Security Sections, the first of which were formed in 1881, from whose abbreviated Russian title (*Okhrannoe Otdelenie*)[12] the Okhrana derived its colloquial name. There was no such corporate entity as the so-called Okhrana. Both the Special Department and the Security Sections were largely staffed by personnel of the Special Corps of Gendarmes (*Otdelnyi Korpus Zhandarmov*) which, numbering about 11,000 men[13] (rising by October 1916 to more than 15,000)[14] and deployed throughout the Tsar Autocrat's empire in the form of Provincial Gendarme Administrations, constituted the executive arm of the political police and came under the Minister of the Interior. The Special Department, nucleus of the Tsarist political police, directed security action against revolutionaries. It was subdivided into eight sections, of which Section II focused on the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), and Section III on the Social Democrats, including both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.[15] The subordinate territorial Security Sections were equipped with investigators and surveillance teams. Additionally, the Special Department controlled a Foreign Security Agency (*Zagranichnaia Okhranka*), with headquarters in the Russian Embassy in Paris, through which security

operations were conducted in Western Europe, the Balkans, the Near East and North America; their purpose was to investigate Russian émigré revolutionary groups—a diaspora which frequently provided leadership, and smuggled literature, for revolutionary organisations on Russian soil.[16]

The Okhrana had diligently studied, infiltrated, and in the long run effectively neutralised the main revolutionary movements,[17] paying special attention to the Bolsheviks, into whose inner councils Okhrana agents had insinuated themselves. The immediate aims of Lenin and of the Okhrana coincided in so far as both were intent on disrupting the brittle unity of the Social Democratic Party; in this Lenin became the unconscious confederate of the Tsarist police.[18] It was the celebrated Okhrana agent, Roman Malinovskii, member of the Bolshevik Central Committee and Lenin's chief lieutenant in Russia, who, as leader of the Bolshevik deputies in the Fourth State Duma, sabotaged their alliance with the Duma Mensheviks, thereby simultaneously fulfilling the requirements of Lenin and of his own Okhrana masters.[19] On various occasions the Okhrana smoothed Lenin's path by conveniently arresting Menshevik leaders, or awkward Bolshevik 'conciliators'.[20] When the legal Bolshevik newspaper, *Pravda*, was founded in St. Petersburg in 1912, the Okhrana obliged by providing the services of two of its agents to act, respectively, as editor (Malinovskii) and treasurer (Miron Chernomazov).[21] The farcical position was reached where, in 1908–9, four out of five members of the Bolshevik Party's St. Petersburg Committee were Okhrana agents.[22]

The extent of the Okhrana's penetration of the Bolshevik Party was such that not only was it minutely informed about the membership, structure, and activities of the Party (one of the best sources on the pre-1917 Bolshevik Party history is a collection of Moscow Okhrana documents),[23] but it was also in a position to influence Bolshevik tactics. Okhrana manipulation contributed significantly to the post-1910 débâcle of the Social Democratic movement. The Department of Police had, through the Okhrana, successfully contained the threat posed by the revolutionary movement, and had reported perceptively on the increasingly explosive temper of the populace,[24] enabling the government to reinforce the Petrograd garrison shortly before the outbreak of the February Revolution.[25] What it neglected to report was the depth of demoralisation and discontent prevailing, for instance, among the liberal intelligentsia and enlightened officialdom.[26]

When the crisis came, the decayed Romanov autocracy

disintegrated like a rotten fabric. After five days of strikes and demonstrations by the hungry Petrograd populace, the garrison mutinied on 27 February (12 March) 1917, and that same day authority in the city passed into the hands of two swiftly improvised institutions functioning side by side in the Tauride Palace: the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and the Provisional Committee of the State Duma. On 1(14) March the Provisional Committee burgeoned into the Provisional Government, under Prince Lvov, composed largely of liberals, but including, as Minister for Justice, the Trudovik socialist, Kerensky, sole representative of the Petrograd Soviet in the new government.

On 3(16) March, following the abdication of the Tsar, the Provisional Government issued a declaration of intent, proclaiming (*inter alia*) the following guiding principles, which had the support of the Petrograd Soviet: complete and immediate amnesty for political prisoners; freedom of speech, press, assembly, and the right to strike; immediate preparation for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, which should establish the form of government and the constitution of the country, on the basis of universal, equal, secret, and direct suffrage; and, furthermore, the replacement of the police by a People's Militia with elected officers, subordinated to the organs of local administration.[27]

Members of the old police, which alone had shown some spirit of resistance during the rioting in Petrograd, queued on 28 February (13 March) at the Tauride Palace to be arrested so as to escape lynching; the more senior police officers, along with the Minister of the Interior, Protopopov, were incarcerated in the Fortress of Peter and Paul.[28] The police were so odiously identified with the old order that they were dismissed wholesale.[29] The dissolution of the Tsarist police was formalised by a law of 10(23) March, whereby the Department of Police was abolished and superseded by a temporary police administration, functioning within the Ministry of the Interior, for the protection of citizens and their property.[30] The entire apparatus of the Okhrana, with its Special Corps of Gendarmes and its Security Sections, was swiftly abolished.[31] Under a statute of 17(30) April,[32] the existing conventional police system in the cities and provinces was replaced by municipally controlled militia administrations and by district rural militia formations. The new militia was concerned with maintenance of law and order, detection of crime, and other routine police functions.

The Provisional Government possessed responsibility without power. It lacked those customary props of authority: an efficient

police force and a reliable army. The newly created militia was inexperienced and decentralised. The army, already demoralised by prolonged blood-letting, had its discipline undermined by the Petrograd Soviet's celebrated 'Order Number One' of 1(14) March; the months ahead were to witness its progressive disintegration. Supreme power was shared equivocally between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies: the one initially consisting of liberals wedded to a programme of gradualist constitutional reform, civil and political liberties, and rule of law; the other dominated until September 1917 by Mensheviks and SRs, committed to the ultimate radicalisation of Russia, but meanwhile pledged to the postponement of crucial decisions on such fundamental issues as redistribution of land until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and fatally intent on supporting the Provisional Government (within which they commanded a majority after July) in its prosecution of a disastrous war.

Meanwhile at the front the carnage continued, and the peasant-soldiers started deserting, 'voting with their feet' as Lenin put it, in order to seize the landowners' coveted estates, until, on the eve of the October *coup d'état*, army deserters numbered two million men. In the capital there was a lack of decisive command, in the provinces a breakdown of authority, and overall a slide into chaos and anarchy. Nature abhors a vacuum; Lenin was swift to appraise and exploit the situation.

Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were ostensibly agreed in accepting Marx's analysis of historical evolution as an inexorable progression of economic stages, of which the final three were the feudal, the capitalist, and the socialist, each stage being characterised by the ascendancy of one competing class over the others; beyond that Marx envisaged an ultimately classless and stateless millennium, a condition of conflict-free communism. In orthodox Marxist terms, Tsarism was equated with the economically feudal, politically autocratic stage of development, whilst the February Revolution stood for the commencement, or at best the consolidation of an economically bourgeois-capitalist and politically parliamentary-democratic era, ushered in by the Revolution of 1905. This bourgeois-democratic stage, which most West European countries had long since attained, was bound to be protracted in Russia, one of the most retarded states in Europe. Socialist revolution could only be accomplished in industrialised states which had already passed through the full process of capitalism, and in which the industrial proletariat decisively outnumbered the bourgeoisie.

Such a remote prospect of revolution in Russia did not suit Lenin, who developed a singular Marxist interpretation of his own. He backdated Russia's attainment of the parliamentary-democratic stage to the constitutional advance consequent upon the 1905 Revolution, and as long ago as 1902 he had contended that capitalism was already dominant in Russia;[33] upon these premises he now claimed that Russia was ready to begin the transition from capitalism to socialism. This went against the statistical evidence: in 1905 industrial workers in Russia numbered a mere 2 million,[34] rising to 2.6 million by 1917,[35] but still representing a tiny minority of the country's total (predominantly peasant) population, which in 1909 stood at 162 million.[36] That Lenin, the realist, appreciated these unpalatable facts, is clear from the candid declaration in his farewell letter to Swiss workers, written in March 1917:

> To the Russian proletariat has fallen the great honour of *initiating* a series of revolutions, arising with objective inevitability out of the imperialist war. But ... we know full well that the proletariat of Russia is *less* organised, *less* prepared and *less* conscious than the workers of other countries. Not its special qualities but rather a specific combination of historical conditions have made the Russian proletariat *for a certain, perhaps very brief time*, the pioneer of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world. Russia is a peasant country, one of the most backward of European countries. *Directly*, Socialism *cannot* triumph there *immediately*. But the peasant character of the country, coupled with the vast holdings of the landowning nobility, *may* give tremendous scope to the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, and make our revolution a *prelude* and a *step* towards the world socialist revolution. ... The Russian proletariat cannot, by its own exertions, successfully *complete* a socialist revolution.[37]

Lenin had long banked on peasant support for the proletarian revolution. The concept 'dictatorship of the proletariat', devised by Marx to indicate the transitional period between capitalism and socialism, with the proletariat assumed to be in a decisive majority, had been introduced into the 1903 RSDRP programme.[38] But in Russia that was a distant perspective. When, in 1905, Lenin perceived the dynamic forces latent in the land-hungry peasantry, he conceived a new formula: 'the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'.[39] By this ingenious formulation, which became part of the Bolshevik platform, Lenin envisaged the numerically negligible proletariat combining, in the bourgeois-capitalist stage, with the peasant masses, whose overwhelming numbers and petty-bourgeois character would contribute the dictatorship's 'bourgeois-democratic' qualities. The industrial proletariat would be the

dominant partner in this alliance and, jettisoning the reactionary peasantry, would eventually effect the transition to socialism.

In Lenin's arbitrary interpretation, the Provisional Government now signified the completion of the bourgeois-democratic stage of development, whilst the Petrograd Soviet heralded the inception of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.[40] Thereby Lenin compressed Marx's lengthy, economically bourgeois-capitalist and politically parliamentary-democratic stage into the short span 1905–17, presenting the proletariat, allied (temporarily) with the peasantry, as now reaching for power, to inaugurate the transition to the third, socialist stage. A practical obstacle barred Lenin's way. The proletariat and peasantry, in so far as they were politically conscious, stood respectively under Menshevik and SR influence. That conjuncture offered the Bolsheviks no basis for power. Lenin had categorically decided against co-operation with these 'social-chauvinist' parties.[41] However, he perceived that whilst the Petrograd Soviet represented the proletariat and 'peasants in uniform', it spoke with the voice of the Menshevik and SR parties in support of the Provisional Government's unpopular prosecution of the war, ignoring the people's urgent desire for 'peace, bread, and freedom'—a phrase used by Lenin as a telling slogan.[42] Lenin's path to power lay in appealing, over the heads of Provisional Government and acquiescent Soviet, direct to the increasingly restive masses, outbidding the other socialist parties with seductive promises.

Lenin pointed out that 'actually, in Petrograd, power is in the hands of workers and soldiers; the new government is *not* using and cannot use violence against them because *there is no* police, *no* army standing apart from the people, *no* officialdom standing all-powerful *above* the people.'[43] In his treatise, *The State and Revolution*, composed in August–September 1917 and first published in 1918, Lenin explained that these organisations, the standing army, the police, and bureaucracy, were the essential instruments of state coercion, used under capitalism by the small but dominant exploiting class, the bourgeoisie, to oppress the exploited majority, the proletariat.[44] The proletariat, too, needed 'state power, the centralised organisation of force, the organisation of violence, for the purpose of crushing the resistance of the exploiters',[45] but since it would now (in alliance with the peasantry) constitute the overwhelming majority of the population suppressing the former exploiting minority, the task would be relatively simple, and the need for a special machine of suppression, the state (defined by Lenin as 'an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another') would begin to

disappear. Lenin argued that 'the people can suppress the exploiters with a very simple 'machine', almost without a 'machine', without a special apparatus, by the simple organisation of the armed masses[46] ... transformed into a universal people's militia.'[47]

The proposed replacement of the standing army by a militia had been written into the programme of the Second Congress of the RSDRP back in 1903.[48] After the February Revolution, this concept of a militia, broadened to embrace not only the police, but also most other state services, became Lenin's constant refrain. In his third *Letter from Afar, Concerning a Proletarian Militia*, written in Zürich on 11(24) March 1917, Lenin proclaimed:

> We need revolutionary *government*, we need (for a certain transitional period) a *state*.... We need a state, but *not* the kind the bourgeoisie needs, with organs of government in the shape of a police force, an army and a bureaucracy separate from and set against the people. All bourgeois revolutions merely perfected *this* state machine, merely transferred *it* from the hands of one party to those of another. The proletariat ... must *'smash'*, to use Marx's expression, this 'ready-made' state machine and substitute a new one for it by *merging* the police force, the army and the bureaucracy with *the entire armed people*. Following the path indicated by the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of 1905, the proletariat must organise and arm *all* the poor, exploited sections of the population in order that they *themselves* should take the organs of state power directly into their own hands, in order that *they themselves should constitute* these organs of state power.'[49]

Lenin commented that the workers had already begun to smash the state machine: 'In Piter [i.e. Petrograd] and many other places the police force has been partly wiped out and partly dissolved. The Guchkov-Miliukov government *cannot* either restore the monarchy, or, in general, maintain power *without restoring* the police force as a special organisation of armed men under the command of the bourgeoisie, separate from and opposed to the people.'[50] However, argued Lenin, the Provisional Government was attempting to build up a so-called 'People's Militia' with elected officers, all very democratic and revolutionary on the surface, but in fact a professional force standing at the disposal of the landlords and capitalists. And so Lenin urged:

> Prevent restoration of the police force! Do not let the local government bodies slip out of your hands! Set up a militia that will really embrace the entire people, be really universal, and be led by the proletariat! ... What kind of a militia do we need, the proletariat, all the toiling people? A genuine *People's* militia, i.e. one that, firstly, consists of the *entire* population, of all adult citizens of *both* sexes; and, secondly, one that combines the functions of a people's army with police functions, with the functions of the chief and fundamental organ of public order and public administration.'[51]

By way of illustration, Lenin calculated that out of the 2 million strong population of Petrograd some 750,000 were able-bodied adults who, serving in the militia one day in fifteen, would form an army of 50,000. Lenin continued:

> Such a militia, 95 hundredths of which would consist of workers and peasants ... would be a safeguard ... against all attempts to restore reaction, ... would be the executive organ of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, ... would transform democracy ... into a means of actually *training the masses* for participation in *all* affairs of state. ... Such a militia would ensure absolute order ... would make it possible to introduce 'universal labour service.'[52]

By sponsoring 'such a militia', Lenin was pursuing two immediate practical aims: the first, defensive, to prevent the Provisional Government from reconstituting an effective police force which might baulk the Bolshevik bid for power; the second, offensive, to promote the growth of a grass roots proletarian militia which might serve that bid. But beyond these short-term tactical motives, Lenin was genuinely concerned to create a mass para-military auxiliary body of this type, to be the executive arm of the dictatorship of the proletariat. During the period April-September 1917, Lenin returned repeatedly to the theme of the militia, demanding above all the dissolution of the regular police, in a whole series of pronouncements, from his *April Theses*[53] to *The State and Revolution*.[54] Lenin's sincerity in this respect cannot be doubted. There is a consistency in his pre-October theoretical and practical writings on this topic. Moreover, Lenin not only preached the doctrine of a part-time militia, a people in arms, but, once in power, he attempted to realise it. The proclaimed task of his post-October government was to dismantle the old Imperial Army, not to raise a new one, with the Red Guard meanwhile playing the part of a territorial militia for military and policing purposes. It was still taken for granted that the flames of the Russian Revolution would spread conflagration throughout Europe, rendering unnecessary the formation of a Russian army. When, early during the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, the first steps were taken to found a 'Workers' and Peasants' Red Army' for the defence of the menaced Russian Revolution, this army was originally visualised as a volunteer force drawn from 'the more class conscious toiling masses'.[55] This concept proved naïvely ineffectual, and the ensuing Civil War would have been lost but for Trotsky's prompt introduction of discipline and professionalism through the creation of a conscript army led by ex-Tsarist officer 'specialists', themselves closely

chaperoned by political commissars. Once established, the professional Red Army became a permanent feature.

Similarly in the regular police sphere, after the October Revolution, the Bolshevik régime disbanded the Provisional Government's modest, decentralised but full-time police force—the 'People's Militia'—and attempted to replace it by a volunteer 'Workers' Militia', leaving its piecemeal realisation to the amateurish efforts of individual Soviets. This experiment, too, proved impracticable, and was abandoned in mid-1918 when the foundations were laid for a regular, centrally controlled police organisation, the 'Workers' and Peasants' Militia'. So, in times of stress, practical politics prevailed over purist doctrine; the eventual implementation of the latter might continue to be the proclaimed intent, but, *force majeure*, the temporary expedient tended to become entrenched and institutionalised.

Likewise with the political police. Nowhere in Lenin's pre-October pronouncements is there the least indication that he had in mind the restoration of such a service. Its very contemplation would have run contrary to Lenin's stated doctrinal position. Besides, any analogy to the hated Okhrana would have been inadmissible. If, here again, Lenin was blown off his ideological course and almost immediately found it necessary to revive the political police in another guise, this remarkable regression must be seen in the context of his self-imposed dilemma. In the name of Marx, whose theories Lenin selectively adopted, adapting them to suit his own purposes, he was wilfully making revolution in the wrong place and at the wrong time—even by Marx's criteria. He was intent on accomplishing a proletarian revolution in a country which had scarcely emerged from the feudal absolutist stage, and which had certainly not run its required bourgeois-democratic course of development; a barely industrialised country in which, by Lenin's own reckoning, the tiny proletariat's revolutionary success depended crucially on the eruption of world revolution and on the support of a huge peasantry whose land-hunger Lenin could harness temporarily, but whose basic character was predominantly 'petty-bourgeois'—to use Lenin's diagnosis—in its possessive attachment to the soil.

To seize power would prove, through a unique concurrence of circumstances, unbelievably easy. War, hunger, demoralisation, the intervention of the February Revolution, division of rule in Petrograd, general drift to chaos, all these factors conspired to Lenin's advantage. The Provisional Government lacked both legitimacy and authority. The SRs and Mensheviks, prominent in the Petrograd

Soviet, refrained from snatching power; these two veteran revolutionary parties, scarred by long contest with the autocracy, now preferred, in exemplary democratic fashion, to await the mandate of the people in the impending election to the Constituent Assembly. Furthermore the Mensheviks, orthodox Marxists that they were, did not believe in leap-frogging the entire historical process of bourgeois-capitalist parliamentary democracy which, according to the classic prescriptions of Marx and Engels, must intervene between feudal absolutism and proletarian socialism; instead, they were prepared to act out the role of a critical but loyal opposition during that predestined phase. General Kornilov's attempt, in late August, at a military take-over, played into Lenin's hands. Power lay in the streets, ripe for the picking. The Bolsheviks, as Lenin had publicly asserted in the Petrograd Soviet, were prepared to govern on their own;[56] privately Lenin confided that, once they had secured power, the Bosheviks would not relinquish it.[57]

But to retain power—'power shared with none, and relying upon the armed force of the masses'[58]—would require almost superhuman exertions and vast sacrifices. With the Bolshevik party as his sole resource, Lenin was preparing to unleash that most savage of wars—civil war—yet he intended the proletariat to fight it using his visionary 'universal people's militia' instead of a professional army and police. This lack of practicality indicates how much Lenin's programme of government was rooted in abstract theory, and how little it was related to reality. Yet Lenin can have cherished few illusions as regards the ferocity of the conflict ahead. In late September he wrote:

> A revolution, a real, profound, a 'people's' revolution to use Marx's expression, is the incredibly complicated and painful process of the death of the old and birth of the new social order, of the mode of life of tens of millions of people. Revolution is a most intense, furious, desperate class struggle and civil war. Not a single great revolution in history has taken place without civil war.'[59]

Lenin's revolution would be an exceptionally violent and painful process in that the old order was not prepared to die, and the new order arrived prematurely. Major surgery would be required, for Lenin was bent on making a proletarian revolution without the conditions of such a revolution; indeed the main protagonist and supposed beneficiary, the proletariat, was scarcely in evidence. As Maxim Gorky was to observe in January 1918: 'A social revolution without the proletariat is an absurdity, a senseless utopia.'[60] In such circumstances the price of success would be exorbitant. Perhaps even

Lenin might have hesitated had he foreseen that his civil war would bring about foreign intervention, would provoke massive peasant rebellion, would cost millions of Russian lives through internecine warfare, executions, pestilence, and famine, and would be fought to the bitter end without benefit of world revolution, closing on the sour note of Kronstadt. Some Bolsheviks suffered qualms on the eve of the October *coup*; Lenin had none. Despite his detached, analytical approach to problems, he was also something of a gambler, a practical opportunist. Ready like the Populist terrorist, Zheliabov, to 'give history a push' if it moved too slowly,[61] threatening to rob him of his revolution, he followed at this critical turning point (as he later admitted) Napoleon's maxim: *'On s'engage et puis on voit.'* [62]

To reduce the long odds stacked against him, Lenin would resort to a potent weapon, that of terror. Lenin distinguished between three categories of terror. Firstly, there were the individual, unco-ordinated acts of terrorism which, as practised by the Socialist Revolutionaries, Lenin had criticised already in 1901 for not being patterned on army operations integrated in an overall military strategy, and for representing instead a useless, and often counter-productive, fragmentation of effort.[63] The Socialist Revolutionary party, founded in 1901, had inherited the People's Will Party's[64] tradition of sporadic terrorism; this the SRs fostered through their Battle Organisation (headed successively by Gershuni, by the enigmatic Okhrana double-agent, Evno Azef, and by Boris Savinkov) which, in the first decade of the century, achieved an impressive series of political assassinations, including two Ministers of the Interior and, in 1911, the Prime Minister Stolypin.[65] By contrast, the Social Democratic Party's programme, drawn up in 1902 (Lenin participated in its drafting) and adopted at the 1903 Party Congress, refrained from advocating the commission of terroristic acts as a method of struggle against absolutism.[66]

Secondly, there was the systematic application of acts of terrorism as part of a calculated campaign in pursuit of a considered objective. This, wrote Lenin in 1901, was quite a different tactic: 'We have never rejected terror on principle, nor can we ever do so, for that is one of those military actions which can be very useful and even indispensable in certain moments of battle.'[67] Hence, during the 1905 Revolution, Lenin was prodigal with advice on training, equipment, weaponry, and on the general tactics of street fighting and guerrilla warfare.[68] Lenin counselled:

Of course any extreme is bad.... Disorderly, unprepared small-scale terror could, if taken to extremes, merely disperse our strength and waste it.... But, on the other hand, on no account must we forget that the signal for insurrection has *already* sounded, that the rising has *already* started. It is not only correct, but even the duty of every revolutionary, given favourable conditions, to initiate attacks. The killing of spies, policemen, gendarmes, the blowing up of police stations, the release of those arrested, the seizure of government funds for use in the interests of the insurrection, such operations are already being practised wherever insurrection is rife.'[69]

As a matter of practical expediency, in 1908 Lenin approved from afar a campaign of expropriations—armed hold-ups and bank robberies—in Russia, designed to replenish the Bolshevik exchequer, despite condemnation by Mensheviks and many Bolsheviks of this compromising policy of terroristic action.[70]

Thirdly, there was Lenin's chosen weapon of mass terror, to be used by the proletariat in order to consolidate its accomplished revolution. The theory of this type of terror was of Populist origin. Whilst repudiating the romantic terrorism of the Populist conspirators of the 1870s and 1880s, Lenin admired their strength of purpose and their organisational methods, and he was deeply influenced by their Russian Jacobin inspirers, prophets like Zaichnevskii and Nechaev, who preached the application of ruthless terror to consolidate the dictatorship of a revolutionary party after it had seized power by means of violent insurrection. From them, too, and especially from the Russian Jacobin political theorist, Petr Tkachev, Lenin derived his concept of a close-knit conspiratorial party organisation of dedicated professional revolutionaries, also a sense of urgency—the need to precipitate and accomplish the revolution, at whatever cost, before, operating within the gradual processes of social and economic evolution, the forces of progressive liberalism had bloodlessly brought about a political transformation crowned by a bourgeois-democratic constitution.[71]

The Populist revolutionaries' effective conspiratorial techniques combined with the Russian Jacobins' prescription of dictatorial rule backed by merciless terror—these were the elements of Populism wedded by Lenin to an eclectic adaptation of Marx: Lenin drew predominantly on the pre-September 1850 Marxist canon, wherein was concentrated the voluntarist, Blanquist, insurrectionary aspect of Marx's by no means consistent philosophy. Conveniently ignored by Lenin was the maturer Marx, who favoured a more objective economic determinism, and showed an increased respect for the evolutionary historical process.[72] Lenin preferred to forget that Marx, even when advocating violent revolution, generally disapproved of the

use of revolutionary terror, and strongly criticised its application by the Jacobins in the French Revolution, regarding such use as a sign of weakness and immaturity in the régime which practised it.[73] Lenin's projection of the Bolshevik Revolution drew deeply on the French Jacobin tradition: in 1905 Lenin, recalling Marx's phrase of 1848 about the French Terror being simply the bourgeoisie's plebeian way of settling scores with feudal absolutism, proposed that, after the coming revolution in Russia, the Bolsheviks—'the Jacobins of contemporary Social-Democracy'—should, like the French Jacobins of 1793, similarly use terror to settle accounts with the autocracy.[74]

Apart from the intellectual and social influences which went to mould Lenin's political philosophy, he had been profoundly affected by the death on the gallows in May 1887 of his elder brother, Alexander Ulianov, sentenced for his prominent part in the People's Will conspiracy to assassinate Tsar Alexander III. The seventeen-year-old Vladimir Ilich is reported to have exclaimed, when he heard of his brother's execution: 'I'll make them pay for this! I swear it.'[75] According to Trotsky, 'Vladimir himself never mentioned his brother unless forced by a direct question, and never once named him in print, although there were many opportunities to do so. This very restraint is the surest testimony to the deep scar the death of Alexander left on his consciousness.'[76] This harrowing personal tragedy may at least partly account for Lenin's implacable hatred of the Tsarist régime, of the nobility, the bourgeoisie and, remarkably, of the intelligentsia; the Ulianov family was linked with these three social strata, from which, however, it experienced a degree of rejection after the scandal of Alexander's assassination attempt.[77]

Whatever the origins and motivation of Lenin's espousal of terror, there is no disputing its significant role in shaping the course of the Bolshevik revolution. For the resource on which Lenin's régime would ultimately depend was terror—the ruthless application of violence as a sovereign means of persuasion. Limitless terror would go far to compensate Lenin for a paucity of popular support on which to base a dictatorship professedly operated by the proletariat, but increasingly involving the regimentation of an entire people. To apply such a terror, to police such a régime, a suitable agency would be required; in Lenin's state that agency would assume the shape of the Cheka.

Chapter I

The Origins and Foundation of the Vecheka

> The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power.... We are different from all the oligarchies of the past, in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognise their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just round the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship.
>
> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* London, 1949, p. 264

> The development of this war [i.e. against Kerensky] alone can lead *us* to power, but we must *speak* of this as little as possible in our propaganda (remembering very well that even tomorrow events may put power into our hands, and then we shall not relinquish it).
>
> Lenin to the Central Committee of the RSDRP (b), written on 30 August (12 September) 1917. Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIV, p. 121

BOLSHEVIK SEIZURE OF POWER THROUGH THE MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE OF THE PETROGRAD SOVIET

Prior to the establishment, in early December 1917, of the Vecheka (the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage), the security functions which it then assumed were largely discharged by the Military Revolutionary Committee[1] (MRC), originally an organ of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and, as from 29 October, affiliated direct to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) of the Second Congress of Soviets. Contemporary chroniclers[2] and later Soviet historians[3] alike have

consistently emphasised the continuity between the MRC and the Vecheka, stressing also the significant part played by Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky[4] in both organisations.

The Bolshevik Party which, with its auxiliary, the Red Guard, constituted Lenin's sole instrument for the capture of power, could claim a membership of no more than 23,600 in January 1917, increasing to 40,000 by April and 200,000 by August.[5] Following the collapse, in late August, of General Kornilov's attempt to seize Petrograd, the Bolsheviks for the first time gained a majority in the Petrograd Soviet (31 August), and thereafter rapidly increased their influence in provincial Soviets, especially in industrial centres.[6] This new pattern of Bolshevik ascendancy did not hold good for the country as a whole; in the mid-November general election to the Constituent Assembly, the peasant masses (which were not represented in the Petrograd Soviet, except by peasants in uniform) would vote decisively for the Socialist Revolutionaries. But for practical purposes it was the Bolshevik dominance in the key Petrograd Soviet, at the focal point of power, that counted. Pre-eminent here was Trotsky, elected the Soviet's chairman on 23 September;[7] he had occupied that same office conspicuously as a young man of twenty-six at the climax of the 1905 Revolution. Now, since July 1917, he adhered to the Bolshevik Party.

The tide had turned for the Bolsheviks. Lenin, who had gone into hiding after the half-hearted and abortive Bolshevik *putsch* in July ('the July Days'), attended, on 10 October, a secret meeting of the Party Central Committee which adopted his resolution that 'an armed rising is inevitable and the time perfectly ripe'.[8] The medium through which the Bolsheviks organised their *coup d'état* was the Military Revolutionary Committee, functioning as the thinly disguised staff headquarters for co-ordination of the insurrection.[9] On 12 October, a closed session of the Petrograd Soviet's Executive Committee voted to form the MRC, ostensibly for the defence of Petrograd, whose evacuation Kerensky's Provisional Government was rumoured to be planning in view of the German army's advance. The MRC, subordinated to the Soviet's Executive Committee, was to incorporate representatives of trade unions, factory committees, workers' militia, etc., and was to co-operate closely with units of the Petrograd garrison.[10]

On 16 October, a resolution to establish the MRC was carried at a plenary meeting of the Petrograd Soviet.[11] The Menshevik minority in the Soviet protested vigorously against the proposal, whilst the moderate SRs boycotted the MRC altogether; this merely facilitated

Bolshevik control. Of the 66 original members of the MRC, all were Bolsheviks except for 14 Left Socialist Revolutionaries (LSRs) and 4 Anarchists.[12] (The LSRs would formally secede from the SR Party on 6 November, establishing an independent LSR Party.) An LSR, P. E. Lazimir, was the first chairman of the MRC; his appointment was a political tactic,[13] calculated to present the MRC as a Soviet rather than a purely Bolshevik emanation,[14] and Lazimir was very soon replaced as chairman by the Bolshevik, N. I. Podvoiskii.[15] But the presiding genius was Trotsky, of whom Stalin wrote in November 1918: 'All the work of practical organisation of the insurrection was conducted under the direct leadership of the President of the Petrograd Soviet, Comrade Trotsky.'[16]

At its first meeting, on 20 October, the MRC posted commissars—fifty-one on this occasion, later hundreds more—to most of the military units in the Petrograd area, their task being to prepare these units for the rising.[17] (It was not until 27 October that a Commissars' Bureau was created in the MRC,[18] with Latsis in charge.)[19] This task was eased by the considerable propaganda and recruitment work already carried out in the army by the Bolshevik Party's Military Organisation, which as early as July 1917 claimed a membership of 26,000.[20] The MRC also had at its disposal the Bolshevik Party's paramilitary force, the Red Guard, consisting of factory workers organised into armed detachments.

The Red Guard was the practical, if only partial, realisation of Lenin's doctrine of an armed people's militia. Red Guard units had been forming under Bolshevik Party auspices since shortly after the February Revolution. Driven underground after 'the July Days', the Red Guard was resurrected at the time of the Kornilov threat, when the Bolsheviks secured the Petrograd Soviet's approval to create an armed workers' militia. At that juncture the Red Guard, armed by the Bolshevik Military Organisation with rifles and machine guns, numbered some 25,000 men.[21] On the eve of the October *coup*, the Red Guard, once more mobilised and armed, amounted to about 20,000 men;[22] it played a prominent role in the Petrograd rising. Formally subordinated to the Petrograd Soviet since the Kornilov episode, the Red Guard's first allegiance was to the Bolshevik Party. Recruited from almost every factory in the Petrograd area, it served under elected officers.[23]

The MRC, operating from the HQ of the Petrograd Soviet in the Smolny Institute, directed the armed seizure of Petrograd during the night of 24/25 October. The Provisional Government's last citadel, the Winter Palace, where Kerensky's Cabinet was in session, was

stormed at midnight on 25/26 October; Kerensky himself had slipped away. In Petrograd there was little resistance, hardly any bloodshed.[24] A proclamation, drafted by Lenin, and issued in the name of the MRC early on 25 October, announced the momentous event: 'To the citizens of Russia! The Provisional Government is deposed. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—the Military Revolutionary Committee, which stands at the head of the Petrograd proletariat and garrison. . . .'[25]

'It was as easy as lifting a feather', Lenin commented later.[26] The *coup* had succeeded; under Trotsky's astute generalship the Bolsheviks had achieved military mastery, and now it was for Lenin, who came out of hiding on 25 October,[27] to convert this into political control. It remained to be seen how easy it would be for 240,000 Bolsheviks to retain state power.[28] The next few days would be crucial, and Bolshevik successes would be attended by casualties, especially in Moscow, where 500 deaths occurred on the Red side alone before the city fell to the Bolsheviks on 2 November, after one week's fighting.[29]

SOCIALIST OPPOSITION TO BOLSHEVIK RULE

The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets opened in the Smolny Institute at 22.45 hours on 25 October; the *coup* had been timed, at Trotsky's instigation, to coincide with the Congress, so as to invest Bolshevik assumption of power with the symbolic prestige of Soviet assent. Some 300 Bolshevik delegates, supported by about 80 left-wing SRs, commanded a majority over the remaining 270 Congress delegates; however, the Congress did not reflect national opinion accurately, if only because it excluded direct peasant representation. The majority of the Mensheviks, also the moderate SRs and the Bundists, walked out of the hall in protest against Bolshevik forcible usurpation of authority. The Bolshevik-LSR quorum proceeded to elect two interim bodies, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly: the first, principally legislative, being the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK), consisting of 62 Bolsheviks, 29 LSRs, and 10 others; the second, characterised as a provisional 'Workers' and Peasants' Government,' was the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), composed solely of Bolsheviks, since the LSRs would only agree to participate in a coalition government combining all socialist parties.

Politically isolated, the Bolsheviks had to contend with instant hostile reaction. By 03.00 hours on 26 October, the Committee for

Salvation of Country and Revolution (KSRiR)[30] had been formed in the City Duma Building, with the participation of members of the Executive of Peasants' Soviets, and of Menshevik and SR leaders such as Dan[31] and Gotz.[32] The KSRiR declared that the Congress at Smolny was illegal, and that the VTsIK of the First Congress was still in office.[33] The KSRiR further proclaimed itself the legitimate heir of Kerensky's Provisional Government, and summoned the population to disobey the 'government of violence', encouraging passive resistance. A strike of government and municipal employees ensued.[34] On 29 October, *Vikzhel*, the Menshevik-influenced All-Russian Executive Committee of the Union of Railwaymen, delivered an ultimatum demanding—under threat of a general rail strike—that all socialist parties should negotiate for the formation of a widely based coalition government. A railway strike could have crippled the Bolsheviks' military and supply capacity at this crucial moment: on 29 October, they had to suppress an officer-cadet rising in Petrograd, and the next day, at Pulkovo, they repulsed a small Cossack force advancing on the capital, led by General Krasnov and by Kerensky. Lenin therefore feigned to negotiate with *Vikzhel*; the Mensheviks and SRs demanded, as the price of a coalition, the exclusion from it of Lenin and Trotsky. When Kamenev and other leading Bolsheviks seemed disposed to accept such terms, Lenin, at a meeting of the Petrograd Bolshevik Party Committee on 1 November, threatened the advocates of coalition with resort to force: if outvoted, he would 'go to the sailors'.[35] Here Lenin was invoking the armed intervention of the sailors of Kronstadt, who had proved their pro-Bolshevik fervour during 'the July Days' and again in October. Five of the coalition advocates, Kamenev,[36] Zinoviev,[37] Rykov, Miliutin, and Nogin, resigned from the Party's Central Committee. At a VTsIK meeting on 4 November, a number of People's Commissars (including Rykov, Commissar for Internal Affairs) resigned from the Sovnarkom. Nogin, the resigning Commissar for Trade and Industry, declared on behalf of the secessionists: 'We hold that it is essential to form a socialist government comprising all the Soviet parties ... we consider that beside this there is only one other path:—the maintenance of a purely Bolshevik government by means of political terror. The Council of People's Commissars has entered upon that path.'[38]

This demonstration of political principle by a Bolshevik minority had been immediately preceded by a declaration by LSR representatives in VTsIK, protesting against a Bolshevik resolution which not only approved the closing down of 'bourgeois' newspapers, but also authorised the control, and, if need be, the confiscation of all private

presses by the Soviet authorities. The LSRs denounced this Bolshevik betrayal of the freedom of the press, which had been a cherished tenet in the programme of all socialist parties.[39] Another bitter criticism raised by the LSRs at this meeting was that the Second Congress of Soviets had constituted VTsIK as the highest organ of state, to which the Sovnarkom was answerable, and yet during the past few days the Sovnarkom had issued a number of decrees without first submitting them to VTsIK for approval.[40] And indeed, in its very first decree, the Congress had specifically subordinated the Sovnarkom to VTsIK authority,[41] and had subsequently ordained that VTsIK could at any time suspend, amend, or rescind any Sovnarkom resolution.[42] These initial enactments characterised VTsIK as an 'organ of active control over the activity of the Workers' and Peasants' Government'.[43] Thus the LSRs and the Bolshevik breakaway group had between them levelled three major charges against the Bolsheviks: that they refused to share power with the other socialist parties, that they were destroying the freedom of the press, and that they were ruling by decree.

THE MRC AS INSTRUMENT FOR CONSOLIDATION OF THE BOLSHEVIK RÉGIME

Meanwhile the Bolsheviks had found the MRC a ready tool for securing their rule. For a brief moment, between the *coup d'état* on 24/25 October and the formation of the Sovnarkom on 26 October, the MRC exercised supreme state power. It established Bolshevik control in Petrograd with speed and efficiency.[44] Thereafter, until its abolition by decision of 5 December 1917, the MRC continued to discharge a number of functions of government, whilst gradually transferring authority to the newly constituted People's Commissariats. When, on 29 October, VTsIK delegated thirteen of its representatives to join the MRC,[45] the latter formally acquired the status of an All-Russian organ, shedding its affiliation to the Petrograd Soviet and adopting the title Military Revolutionary Committee attached to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets.[46] It was in fact subordinated both to VTsIK and to the Sovnarkom.

On 30 October, the MRC was entrusted with the execution of various tasks allotted by the Sovnarkom, and in particular with the safeguarding of revolutionary order, the combating of counter-revolution, and the protection of the Sovnarkom and the Petrograd Soviet.[47] Thus, after the October *coup*, the MRC functioned as the chief instrument for ensuring the internal security of the Bolshevik

régime. Composed of a number of departments, headed by a presidium and a central executive committee,[48] the MRC came to control a network of provincial MRCs which were springing up in its image, and which contributed signally to the consolidation of Bolshevik power beyond the capital.[49] These provincial MRCs were eventually abolished under a decree published on 24 December 1917, their functions having been inherited by local Soviets.[50] Meanwhile, a circular instruction issued on 13 November by the MRC to its local branches defined some of their principal duties as follows: the active combating of counter-revolution, supervision of the press, maintenance of revolutionary order in towns and villages.[51]

For the discharge of its security tasks the central MRC developed a number of ancillary commissions: the Military Investigation Commission, the Supervisory Commission for the Press, the Commission for Checking Credentials of Smolny Personnel, the Commission for Reorganising the Security of Petrograd, and the Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage. The last two commissions were attached, respectively, to the Petrograd Soviet and to VTsIK, the remainder to the MRC.

MILITARY INVESTIGATION COMMISSION[52]

This agency, sometimes referred to broadly as the Investigation Commission of the MRC, was formed in the last days of October and worked round the clock dealing with arrested military personnel, officials sabotaging their duties, leaders of counter-revolutionary parties, and so forth. It performed the type of work later done by the Vecheka,[53] and in this sense can be counted as one of the Vecheka's predecessors. In particular, it investigated the officer-cadet rising of 29 October and the case of Purishkevich's monarchist organisation, *Russkoe Sobranie* (Russian Assembly).[54] The first chairman of the Military Investigation Commission appears to have been Sheinkman, replaced on 4 November by P. I. Stuchka;[55] appointed to the Commission's collegium that same day was the Polish lawyer M. Iu. Kozlovskii,[56] who succeeded Stuchka as Commission chairman on 16 November, when the latter was appointed Acting Deputy People's Commissar for Justice.[57] Kozlovskii co-directed the Commission jointly with P. A. Krasikov,[58] who by 12 November was serving in its collegium.[59] Upon the abolition of the MRC on 5 December, the Military Investigation Commission transferred its functions to the Investigation Commission of the Revolutionary Tribunal attached to the Petrograd Soviet,[60] which was likewise directed by Kozlovskii and Krasikov.[61]

SUPERVISORY COMMISSION FOR THE PRESS

As early as 26 October, the MRC closed down a number of 'bourgeois' newspapers advocating resistance to Soviet authority.[62] The next day the Sovnarkom passed a Decree on the Press, justifying the closures as being a purely temporary and exceptional measure, and promising that, upon the consolidation of the new order, all administrative restrictions on the press would be discontinued, and complete freedom of the press established on the basis of a generous and progressive law.[63] The Bolshevik muzzling of the press was hotly debated by VTsIK on 4 November—the draconic censorship measures being angrily assailed by the LSRs—and it was partly on this issue that several Bolsheviks resigned from the Sovnarkom after Lenin's motion, proposing governmental control over printing facilities, had been carried by 34 votes to 24.[64] 'It is impossible to separate the question of freedom of the press from the other questions of the class struggle', declared Lenin.[65]

Pursuant to an MRC decision, several 'counter-revolutionary' newspapers were closed down on 9 November and their presses confiscated.[66] At the bidding of the Sovnarkom, the MRC instructed the Commissar for Press Affairs to institute strict control over implementation of the Decree on the Press.[67] A Supervisory Commission for the Press, attached to the MRC,[68] was formed by MRC decision of 19 November;[69] a series of newspapers were silenced and their printing equipment transferred to the revolutionary press.[70] After the MRC was wound up, the Vecheka assumed partial responsibility for dealing with the 'counter-revolutionary' press.

SECURITY OF SMOLNY

The Smolny Institute, a huge building with a classical façade, situated on the eastern edge of Petrograd, originally housed a finishing school for the daughters of the nobility; following the July Days it was converted into the headquarters of the Petrograd Soviet and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the First Congress of Soviets,[71] and here too the Bolshevik Party planned the October *coup* under cover of the MRC. At its meeting on 22 October, the MRC had appointed Dzerzhinsky to be Commandant of Smolny, responsible for security of the building and for organising Smolny's communications with other areas of Petrograd.[72] This was a vital task both immediately before and during the October *coup*, when Smolny already constituted the nerve centre of Soviet and Bolshevik Party power, and subsequently, when it additionally became the seat of the

Sovnarkom. On 2 November, Dzerzhinsky was succeeded as Commandant of Smolny by a sailor, P. D. Malkov,[73] but he continued to attend to the overall security of Smolny during the ensuing weeks; on 16 November, still styling himself 'Commandant of the Smolny Institute', he signed a pass for entry to Smolny made out to 'John Reed, correspondent of the American socialist press'.[74]

On 1 November, the MRC decided to inspect the whole Smolny building and to institute a regular guard and security system.[75] Dzerzhinsky directed the inspection.[76] At first the protection of Smolny, and particularly of Lenin's quarters and Sovnarkom premises, was effected by Red Guard workers and sailors of the Baltic Fleet; machine guns were trained out of the Sovnarkom secretariat windows.[77] In late November, these guard duties were assigned to a specially formed composite battalion commanded by Ia. Kh. Peterson, hand-picked from the eight Lettish rifle regiments serving in the Russian army. By mid-March 1918, when the Soviet Government moved to Moscow, this Lettish battalion numbered 500 riflemen, more than half of whom were Bolshevik Party members; this élite detachment continued to guard the Sovnarkom after its installation in the Kremlin.[78] The battalion developed into the ninth Lettish rifle regiment.[79]

On 22 November, a conflict arose between Peters,[80] who had been instructed by the MRC to apply security screening to all persons having access to Smolny, and a self-appointed commission (consisting of Smolny employees who were Party members) for clearing Smolny of undesirable elements. Dzerzhinsky, Uritskii,[81] and Skrypnik[82] all took part in this MRC debate, and it was agreed that the existing commission should be confirmed in its role of checking credentials of Smolny personnel.[83] The commission was headed by V. A. Avanesov[84] (member and Secretary of VTsIK), greatly assisted by Dzerzhinsky.[85]

COMMISSION FOR REORGANISING THE SECURITY OF PETROGRAD

Dzerzhinsky was also instrumental in founding the Commission for Reorganising the Security of Petrograd.[86] On 19 November, he chaired the MRC meeting which proposed the Commission's creation and its attachment to the Petrograd Soviet; on it were to sit representatives of Petrograd area Soviets, of the Red Guard's central command, and (temporarily) of the militiamen's union.[87] On 22 November, the Sovnarkom accepted this recommendation, approving Dzerzhinsky's proposal that the Commission should replace the *Gradonachalstvo*—the Petrograd City Governor's Office—and that it

should be headed by Voroshilov.[88] Prior to Voroshilov's assumption of this post, it was held briefly by Averin. The new Commission functioned in the *Gradonachalstvo* building[89] at 2 Gorokhovaia Street, which Dzerzhinsky had commandeered after the October *coup*, and which would soon also become the first headquarters of the Vecheka, subsequently housing the Petrograd Cheka.[90]

COMMISSION FOR COMBATING COUNTER-REVOLUTION AND SABOTAGE

Very little has come to light concerning the Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, attached to VTsIK, this being its full title as given in the relevant volume of documents on the MRC[91] (elsewhere it figures simply as Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, without mention of affiliation).[92] Dzerzhinsky's proposal to organise this Commission was accepted by the MRC on 21 November (4 December). Nominated as members of this 'Commission of Five' were: Skrypnik, Flerovskii, Blagonravov, Galkin, and Trifonov.[93] The following day Skrypnik proposed, and the MRC authorised, measures (unspecified) to be taken for combating counter-revolution. In response to an SR (clearly LSR) protest, the MRC agreed to include three (unnamed) (L)SR representatives as members of the Commission,[94] which Dzerzhinsky himself reportedly directed,[95] working in Room 77 (third floor) at Smolny.[96] This Commission, too, moved into the *Gradonachalstvo* building; it soon attracted a flow of reports concerning the activities of counter-revolutionary organisations in Petrograd.[97]

BONCH-BRUEVICH'S COMMITTEE FOR COMBATING POGROMS

A problem that arose from the first at this time of upheaval was that of public disturbances and rioting. Already on 27 October, in view of the prevalence of drunkenness and of sale of arms and alcohol, the MRC ordered searches, raids, and arrests to be carried out.[98] By 29 October, the MRC was operating a 'special reconnaissance service',[99] composed of Red Guards, 'for reporting on excesses and hooligan manifestations'.[100] In early November, the wave of drunken rioting spread, and the MRC posted a guard of 'forty sober men' to protect the stocks of wine stored in the Winter Palace.[101] However, the problem assumed such proportions that, partly on Dzerzhinsky's initiative, the MRC decided to pour all the Winter Palace wine supplies into the Neva, and, on 26 November, further decided to

destroy all potentially harmful stores of alcohol throughout Petrograd.[102]

To deal with wide-scale pogroms resulting from looting of wine by bands of demoralised soldiery of the Petrograd garrison, on 2 December VTsIK appointed Blagonravov (Commandant of the Peter and Paul Fortress) 'extraordinary military commissar of Petrograd for combating drunkenness and pogroms', and placed military forces at his disposal.[103] On 4 December, the Petrograd Soviet established a special Committee for Combating Pogroms,[104] under V. D. Bonch-Bruevich's direction.[105] At 03.00 hours on 6 December, a proclamation issued by this Committee, attached to VTsIK, declared Petrograd to be in a state of siege, imposed a curfew, prohibited public assemblies in the streets, and warned that attempts to loot wine cellars would be met by machine-gun fire.[106] During that night armoured cars patrolled the streets, with sirens screaming and machine-guns rattling.[107]

From early on, according to Bonch-Bruevich, his office in Room 75 at Smolny was the headquarters of the Workers' Commissars who, besides contending with wine pogroms, also held in their hands the main threads of order and security in the 'Red Capital'.[108] A mass of information flowed into the Sovnarkom Administration Office, which Bonch-Bruevich headed, and into Room 75, where—as Bonch-Bruevich put it—'there functioned the first extraordinary commission for maintaining order and for combating pogroms in the capital'.[109]

During November, Bonch-Bruevich was concerned with tracking down various conspiracies, and laid before Lenin evidence showing that these were instigated by the Kadet Party. It was this evidence, so Bonch-Bruevich claimed, that led Lenin to outlaw the Kadets.[110] Bonch-Bruevich's Committee, still operating from Room 75, continued these security activities, in parallel with the emergent Vecheka, until the Soviet Government's transfer to Moscow in mid-March 1918.[111]

It is an interesting point that when—on 25 or 26 October—Lenin was cogitating on government appointments, he evidently wavered between appointing V. D. Bonch-Bruevich Commissar for Revolutionary Order or making him chief of the Sovnarkom Administration Office[112]—a responsible position which Bonch-Bruevich filled from late October 1917 until 1920.[113] In the event no such post as Commissar for Revolutionary Order was created, but had it been, then it might well have rendered the Vecheka superfluous.

FORMATION OF NKVD AND ORIGIN OF NEW MILITIA

Apart from the MRC and the various commissions and committees engendered by it, the embryonic People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) and the Militia were also concerned with the maintenance of public order and security; it is a measure of Dzerzhinsky's energy and of his preoccupation with combating counter-revolution, that he sat on the NKVD Collegium from its inception, and played a key part in reorganising the Militia.

Along with other People's Commissariats, the NKVD was established on 26 October, its first Commissar being Rykov; owing to Rykov's resignation on 4 November, some delay occurred over winding up the old Ministry of the Interior and the construction of the NKVD in its place. Meanwhile the MRC discharged the functions proper to a state organ of internal affairs.[114] This situation was discussed by the Sovnarkom on 15 November, when the closing down of the MRC was mooted. Sverdlov[115] objected, proposing instead that the MRC's duties should be considerably reduced, and that some of its best members should be assigned to direct the 'Ministry of the Interior', as it was still referred to. The following day, 16 November, the Sovnarkom appointed G. I. Petrovskii[116] to be Commissar for Internal Affairs, with M. K. Muranov as his deputy, and F. E. Dzerzhinsky, M. Ia. Latsis, I. S. Unshlikht, M. S. Uritskii, and P. E. Lazimir as Collegium members.[117] On 17 November, Petrovskii's appointment was formalised by decree.[118] Dzerzhinsky, absorbed in his duties in the MRC and, presently, in the Vecheka, had little time to spare for the NKVD, and soon disappeared from its Collegium,[119] to rejoin it eventually *ex officio* as Vecheka Chairman, under the terms of the VTsIK statute of 28 October 1918.[120] Of the originally nominated Collegium members, only Petrovskii, Latsis, and Unshlikht—and briefly Dzerzhinsky—took up their appointments.[121]

One of Rykov's first tasks had been to pass a decree, signed on 28 October and published on 30 October,[122] founding a new 'Workers' Militia', attached to local Workers' and Soldiers' (but not Peasants') Soviets. However, it would take some time to implement this measure and meanwhile, as a short-term compromise, consideration was given to using, despite its suspect class allegiance, the 'People's Militia' inherited from the Provisional Government. In Petrograd, a Militia Council, representing 6,000 People's Militiamen, offered its services to the MRC, leaving a hard core of only 600 Militiamen still supporting the anti-Bolshevik City Duma. Within the MRC, policy differences on using the old Militia divided the Bolsheviks. One

faction, led by the Petrcgrad Military Region Commander, V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko, and clearly influenced by Lenin's doctrine of a universal militia, sought the instant and complete abolition of the 'People's Militia', and its replacement by a 'people in arms'; a more pragmatic faction, headed by Dzerzhinsky and Avanesov, favoured its temporary retention. In mid-December, the new Petrograd City Duma decreed the dissolution of the People's Militia. The task of preserving order in Petrograd fell on the Red Guard.[123] The winding up of the old Militia occurred earlier in Petrograd than elsewhere; in some localities the haphazard process extended into the spring of 1918.

'WHITE-GUARDIST' RESISTANCE; KADET PARTY OUTLAWED

The suppression of the officer-cadet rising on 29 October and the defeat of General Krasnov at Pulkovo on 30 October had disposed of the immediate armed threat to the Bolshevik régime in Petrograd. But conspiracies continued to flourish in the capital, and the MRC took measures to counter them. Dzerzhinsky supervised the investigation, by the MRC's Military Investigation Commission, of Purishkevich's suppressed monarchist organisation, *Russkoe Sobranie*, which was closely linked with the command of the Don Cossack Ataman, General Kaledin.[124] Other military forces opposed to the Soviet order were also beginning to muster in the south; such was the Volunteer Army being formed by General Alekseev, the former Commander-in-Chief, aided by Generals Kornilov and Denikin. These forces acted as a magnet, attracting 'White-Guardist' recruits, drawn mainly from among former Tsarist officers. Meanwhile, in the Ukraine, the nationalist Central Rada proclaimed an independent republic, whilst in Belorussia the ex-Tsarist general, Dowbór-Muśnicki, led a hostile Polish Corps.

The Sovnarkom, in an appeal issued as a decree on 30 November, declared that civil war had broken out under the direction of the liberal Kadet Party,[125] which, by a Sovnarkom pronouncement signed by Lenin on 28 November, had been collectively labelled 'enemies of the people', and its leaders rendered liable to arrest and trial by Revolutionary Tribunal.[126] Within VTsIK, the LSRs strenuously opposed the decree; in their eyes the Kadets were indeed the moral and physical incarnation of bourgeois counter-revolution, but to condemn an entire category comprising countless innocent individuals was to create an all too convenient scapegoat for the sins of the bourgeoisie and a dangerous precedent for other hapless parties. The

LSR, Steinberg, later observed that this decree constituted the first step towards legitimation of the murderous Red Terror to come.[127]

The term 'enemies of the people', used in the tradition of the French Revolution, literally put its victims outside the law, with every man's hand against them. Latsis, exaggerating considerably, later commented that in those early days of the Bolshevik régime, when revolutionary justice meant lynch law, to declare anyone an enemy of the people was tantamount to a sentence of death.[128] However, there is no evidence to show that, with the exception of the luckless ex-Provisional Government ministers, Shingarev and Kokoshkin, any Kadet leaders or party members were put to death at this time. The Bolsheviks applied the term 'enemies of the people', not merely to political opponents but also to disturbers of public order: on 29 October, a local branch of the MRC stigmatised as 'enemies of the people' all who engaged in the sale of vodka, in pogroms, in sniping from houses, in looting, or just in insobriety.[129]

THE MRC COMBATS PROFITEERING AND PUBLIC SERVICE STRIKE

The MRC, having assumed responsibility for ensuring the provisioning of cities,[130] vigorously combated the spread of profiteering. On 9 November, the Moscow MRC declared: 'Speculation in essential goods and foodstuffs has recently reached unbelievable proportions, and a very serious struggle against this is the most immediate task.'[131] On 11 November, *Izvestia* published a Petrograd MRC resolution denouncing all plunderers, marauders, and speculators as 'enemies of the people', and calling for their immediate arrest and imprisonment.[132] And the following day *Izvestia* carried a Sovnarkom instruction, over Lenin's signature, addressed, in the form of a decree, to the MRC; it announced that, as the distribution of provisions was being rapidly reduced to chaos by speculators and marauders, the MRC would take the strictest measures to extirpate profiteering, sabotage, and hoarding.[133] Significantly, the same issue of *Izvestia* reported that the MRC was daily despatching special detachments made up of sailors, soldiers, and workers to the grain-producing provinces in order to organise speedy supplies for Petrograd and for the front.[134] We have here the genesis of the food requisitioning squads which were to become a characteristic feature of 'War Communism' in the countryside.

The economic crisis was aggravated by a prolonged strike of *ancien régime* public service personnel in Petrograd who, as a class, were bitterly hostile to the Bolsheviks. This action, initiated by the KSRiR

on the morrow of the October *coup*, was co-ordinated by the Union of Unions, i.e. by the combined trade unions of government employees in Petrograd, which, with the support of the City Duma, the Committee of Public Safety (founded on 24 October by the City Duma, ostensibly for the non-political purpose of protecting the lives and property of the population), the defiant VTsIK of the First Congress of Soviets, and the underground 'Provisional Government' (the so-called *Malyi Sovet*, formed by the KSRiR), jointly disposed of formidable financial resources, out of which the strikers were advanced wages up to 1 January 1918.[135] When, in late October/early November 1917, the newly appointed People's Commissars attempted to take possession of their respective ministries, they found rooms and safes locked, and virtually all the personnel absent.[136]

The MRC was in the forefront of the Bolsheviks' battle against this campaign of passive resistance, which they termed 'sabotage'. *Izvestia* of 7 November carried an MRC proclamation denouncing the 'wealthy classes' and their supporters who were hindering work in government and municipal services, and were attempting to disrupt railway, postal, and telegraphic communications.[137] That same day, at a meeting of the Moscow Soviet's Executive Committee, a speaker reporting on the activities of the Moscow MRC stated: 'the banks and banking employees are boycotting us, as are the whole intelligentsia and bourgeoisie, but we shall not stop at any measures to make them work'.[138] Back in Petrograd, on 9 November, the MRC ordered the arrest of KSRiR members, and, on 16 November, the Sovnarkom decreed the dissolution of the City Duma; on 20 November, the MRC took steps to wind up the dissolved Duma and the KSRiR.[139] And on 26 November, the MRC declared all employees of public departments who sabotaged the national economy to be 'enemies of the people'.[140] The MRC effort to suppress the strike was directed by Dzerzhinsky.[141]

THE MRC DISSOLVED AND THE VECHEKA ESTABLISHED

The MRC was essentially a provisional apparatus, holding the fort until the regular departments of state—the People's Commissariats—emerged. By 25 November, the Commissariats were sufficiently entrenched for the Sovnarkom to order the MRC to start transferring the bulk of its responsibilities to them.[142] On 5 December, the MRC, taking the view that its military tasks connected with the Revolution in Petrograd had been completed, and that its 'further work should be handed over to the department for combating counter-revolution attached to [V]TsIK', declared its decision to abolish all its

departments and to hand over all their affairs to appropriate departments of VTsIK, to the Sovnarkom, to the Petrograd Soviet, and to local Soviets. A liquidation commission numbering eight persons was appointed, whose functions were to be limited to urgent suppression of counter-revolution, and whose work should be completed within seven days. All orders authorising searches, arrests, requisitioning, and confiscation in the name of the MRC must be signed by two members of the liquidation commission.[143] The latter consisted of Avanesov, Galkin, Drugov,[144] Evseev,[145] Ilin,[146] Peters, Peterson,[147] and Prokhorov.[148] Dzerzhinsky, too, was active in the liquidation commission.[149]

The MRC announcement assumed the existence of a department for combating counter-revolution attached to VTsIK, to which its residual security responsibilities should now be transferred. As already noted, on 21 November the MRC had created, on Dzerzhinsky's initiative, the Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, attached to VTsIK;[150] despite certain ambiguities,[151] it seems possible that this Commission had become the VTsIK department for combating counter-revolution which was now intended to inherit the security functions of the MRC. If so, however, then this intention was overtaken by events, for on 6(19) December the Sovnarkom, sitting under Lenin's chairmanship, heard a report concerning the imminence of a general strike of state employees throughout Russia,[152] and resolved 'to charge Comrade Dzerzhinsky to establish a special commission to examine the possibility of combating such a strike by the most energetic revolutionary measures, and to determine methods of suppressing malicious sabotage. Lists of members of the commission and of measures for combating sabotage are to be submitted for tomorrow's meeting. Comrade Petrovskii is to communicate this resolution to Comrade Dzerzhinsky.'[153]

On 7 December, before the Sovnarkom met, Lenin wrote a note to Dzerzhinsky:

> With regard to your report for today, about measures for combating saboteurs and counter-revolutionaries. Is it not possible to produce a decree along the following lines: ... The bourgeoisie is intent on committing the most heinous crimes, suborning the scum of society ... to carry out pogroms. The supporters of the bourgeoisie, especially among higher functionaries, bank officials, etc., are sabotaging their work and organising strikes in order to undermine government measures for bringing about a socialist transformation. It has even come to sabotage of food supplies, thus threatening millions with hunger. Exceptional measures are essential for dealing with counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs. Consequently the Council of People's Commissars decrees: ...'

Then followed Lenin's detailed proposal that all persons whose income or assets exceeded a certain level, all employees of banks, firms and state or public enterprises, should be obliged to register and to work, under pain of punishment.[154]

The urgency of the public service strike crisis was such that, at its meeting on 7(20) December (attended by Lenin as chairman, by Stalin, Petrovskii, and others),[155] the Sovnarkom decided not to disperse until Dzerzhinsky's improvised special commission, then still in session, had presented its proposals.[156] That same evening, Dzerzhinsky made his report to the Sovnarkom. In his speech, describing the internal dangers confronting the Revolution, he said:

> We need to send to that front—the most dangerous and cruel of fronts—determined, hard, dedicated comrades ready to do anything in defence of the Revolution. Do not think that I seek forms of revolutionary justice; we are not now in need of justice. It is war now—face to face, a fight to the finish. Life or death! I propose, I demand an organ for the revolutionary settlement of accounts with the counter-revolutionaries. And we must act not tomorrow, but today, now. ...[157]

The Sovnarkom approved Dzerzhinsky's specific recommendations for the formation of an appropriate organ. The minutes of the Sovnarkom read as follows:

> 7 December 1917. *Heard*: ... 9. Dzerzhinsky's report on the organisation and composition of the Commission for combating sabotage. Composition (not yet complete): 1) Ksenofontov, 2) Zhedilev, 3) Averin, 4) Petersen, 5) Peters, 6) Evseev, 7) Trifonov, V., 8) Dzerzhinsky, 9) Sergo? 10) Vasilevskii?[158] The Commission's tasks:
>
> 1 To suppress and liquidate all attempts and acts of counter-revolution and sabotage throughout Russia, from whatever quarter.
> 2 To hand over for trial by revolutionary tribunal all saboteurs and counter-revolutionaries, and to work out means of combating them.
> 3 The Commission solely carries out preliminary investigation, in so far as this is necessary for suppression.
>
> The Commission is divided into departments: (1) information, (2) organisation department (for organising the campaign against counter-revolution throughout Russia and [for organising] ancillary departments), (3) department for operational action. The Commission will be finally constituted tomorrow. Until then the MRC liquidation commission will continue to function. The Commission will devote prime attention to the press, to sabotage, to the Kadets, Right SRs, saboteurs and strikers. Measures—confiscation, expulsion from domicile, deprivation of ration cards, publication of lists of enemies of the people, etc.
>
> *Resolved*: ... 9. To call the Commission—the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, attached to the Council of People's Commissars—and to establish it. To be published.[159]

The 'All-Russian' status of the Cheka formally limited its operation to

the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (RSFSR), excluding such former Tsarist territories as Poland, Finland, the Baltic provinces, the Ukraine, Belorussia, and the countries of the Caucasus.

THE NATURE OF THE NASCENT VECHEKA

Half-hearted Soviet attempts to represent this Sovnarkom resolution as a decree have long since been abandoned.[160] It was unequivocally described as a resolution or decision of the Sovnarkom by Latsis in 1922,[161] and by the Large Soviet Encyclopedia in 1929 and again in 1951.[162] It was never published as a decree. A Chekist, Moroz, wrote in 1919: 'The existence of the Chekas was not provided for by any legal basis ... life itself dictated that they should be organised.'[163] Writing in 1924, Krylenko, Chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal, remarked: 'Up to November 1918 it [the Vecheka] existed without any statutes or laws.'[164]

As originally conceived, the Vecheka was an administrative organ whose purpose was primarily investigative, and certainly not judicial. Its punitive rights were strictly limited; initially, the Vecheka did not even enjoy powers of arrest, though these were quickly enough conferred upon it (among other investigation commissions) by decree[165] of the Commissariat of Justice[166] (hereafter NKIu) on 16 (29) December 1917, and the sphere of its responsibilities rapidly expanded to meet the mounting challenge of counter-revolution.

Maybe it was this swift development in the Vecheka's character that prompted repeated endeavours at sessions of the Sovnarkom during December 1917–January 1918 to draft a suitable decree 'on speculation and combating counter-revolution'; however, 'in view of its inadequate formulation it was not published'.[167] For his report to the Sovnarkom on 7 December 1917, Dzerzhinsky had himself prepared a decree draft, in response to Lenin's note proposing a decree against strikers. Dzerzhinsky's manuscript draft is described by his biographer, Zubov, as 'Draft of a decree concerning combating of counter-revolution and sabotage. December 1917'.[168] In this draft, Dzerzhinsky listed categories of persons against whom Vecheka activities would be directed, and who would be declared 'enemies of the people', standing 'outside the law': e.g. provocateurs who penetrated revolutionary organisations for subversive purposes, forgers of documents purportedly issued by revolutionary organisations, slanderers of Soviet authority, instigators of conspiracies, pogroms, etc., pillagers, profiteers, traders, etc. However, Dzerzhinsky's proposed decree was not enacted.

A myth, persisting to this day, has it that Lenin *ipsissimus*

fathered the Vecheka. Few Soviet writers have actually asserted that Lenin personally drafted the Sovnarkom founding resolution,[169] but virtually all claim that Lenin's celebrated note to Dzerzhinsky was the vital directive which, allegedly, begat and shaped the Vecheka;[170] the tradition has been to quote extracts from the note's rhetorical preamble, concentrating on Lenin's call for 'exceptional measures to combat counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs'. Soviet historians conveniently overlook the fact that Lenin, in his note, was concerned solely with the state employees' strike, and that his draft decree proposed various measures—some to be effected through the NKVD—for labour registration of white-collar workers and of the bourgeoisie; none of this had any direct relevance to the Sovnarkom's resolution of 7 December, which specifically provided for the establishment of an embryonic and temporary, but none the less recognisable, state security organisation.

On the consistent showing of Lenin's pre-October doctrine, nothing could have been further from his intention, *at that time*, than the introduction of a political police system; he had explicitly condemned the standing army and regular police force as the indispensable instruments of a bourgeois-democratic régime, to the destruction of which he was dedicated. In sponsoring the Vecheka's creation, Lenin, intent on the pursuit of power—which was essential to the realisation of his programme—was simply reacting to obstacles arising in his path. Improvising pragmatically, he was following the logic of necessity, oblivious of the implications of his actions in terms of erosion of the integrity of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. That is not to say that Lenin bore no responsibility for the Vecheka as it subsequently developed, which he clearly did, as emerges in this study.

All the evidence points to Dzerzhinsky being the author of the Vecheka concept; it was he who was charged by the Sovnarkom to propose measures to deal with the crippling strikes, and his were the practical recommendations accepted by the Sovnarkom.[171] Dzerzhinsky had by now established himself as an expert on security; he had already initiated several security projects, such as the Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, and the Commission for Reorganising the Security of Petrograd. When responsibilities were being apportioned among the newly appointed NKVD Collegium members, Dzerzhinsky had significantly opted to attend to the problem of restoring order throughout the country; before he could tackle that daunting task, however, he had become wholly engrossed in the more immediate priority of imposing discipline and suppressing counter-revolution in the capital.[172] It is reasonable to

infer that when the precise moment of the MRC's dissolution coincided with Lenin's approach to Dzerzhinsky for advice and action regarding the escalating public service strike, Dzerzhinsky discerned here an opportunity to weld the disparate and dissolving security elements into a centralised system.[173]

The close connection between the MRC and the Vecheka is very clear; it was as though the Vecheka had been expressly created to fill the vacuum left by the disbanded MRC. As Dzerzhinsky later commented: 'The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission was formed at that moment when the Petrograd [Military] Revolutionary Committee was dissolved and when no agency was available to assume responsibility for fighting against counter-revolution, sabotage, and speculation.'[174] A notable continuity in personnel linked the MRC and its liquidation commission with the Vecheka: six of the ten members of the Vecheka Collegium as constituted on 7 December were members of the MRC (the exceptions being Averin, Ksenofontov, Vasilevskii, and Zhidelev);[175] three of the MRC's eight-man liquidation commission (Evseev, Peters, and Peterson) entered the original Vecheka Collegium, and one or two more (Ilin and probably Drugov) joined it almost immediately afterwards.

The proposal to attach the Extraordinary Commission to the Sovnarkom may well have come from Dzerzhinsky.[176] Yet there can be little doubt that the most practical and obvious solution would have been to entrust responsibility for combating counter-revolution in its various manifestations to the NKVD, as being the directing and co-ordinating department for units of local government, i.e. the territorial network of Soviets, which in turn were responsible for controlling the law-and-order police—the Militia. Himself a founder-member of the NKVD Collegium, and much involved in reorganising the Militia in the Petrograd region, Dzerzhinsky was ideally placed to supervise the construction of a security apparatus subordinated to the NKVD.

Latsis later contended[177] that this function was not allotted to the NKVD because the Bolsheviks feared that the LSRs (whose admission to a coalition with the Bolsheviks was then in process of negotiation) would demand representation there, and would impede the work of crushing counter-revolution. However, the logic of Latsis's argument falls down on several counts: it was already a certainty that the LSRs would join the Sovnarkom itself (which they did on 12 December) and thus be excellently placed to exercise control, or at any rate a veto, over the Sovnarkom's appendage, the Vecheka. Furthermore, not only was an LSR, Ilin, co-opted (by Dzerzhinsky

himself) onto the Vecheka Collegium on the day after its formation,[178] but just one month later several more LSRs were permitted (however reluctantly) to assume key posts in the Vecheka, and to retain these even after Bolshevik return to single-party rule in March 1918. A more telling argument against subordinating the Vecheka to the NKVD would have been that such an arrangement might create the impression that the proletarian government's security organ was being constituted as part of the regular machinery of state under departmental control, thus suggesting too close a parallel to the detested Okhrana.[179] By giving it the status of an 'extraordinary' agency, and by attaching it to the Sovnarkom, the Bolsheviks demonstrated the Vecheka's temporary, exceptional nature, whilst stressing its direct supervision by the highest and most responsible governmental body, other than VTsIK.

The question then arises: Why was the Vecheka not attached to VTsIK, as had been the case (or at any rate the intention) with the Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, founded on 21 November. One Soviet historian considers that the preference for attachment to the Sovnarkom rather than to VTsIK, i.e. to the executive rather than to the legislative element of government (a distinction that soon became blurred), reflected the intended operational character of the Vecheka.[180] A more likely reason may have been that, from the start, VTsIK functioned as a multi-party forum, containing not merely strong LSR representation, but also delegates from minor socialist groups, besides reserving a place for the dissenting Mensheviks and Right SRs. Bolshevik control over the Vecheka through VTsIK would therefore have risked emasculation. In practice, the Sovnarkom would gradually appropriate the powers of VTsIK, as Lenin came to depend increasingly upon the former, relegating the latter to the role of a rubber stamp; in those early months of the Soviet régime, however, VTsIK was a significant and prestigious body, with power concentrated in its presidium. Elected on 6 November, the presidium's members included Sverdlov, Dzerzhinsky, and Avanesov.[181] Basically, of course, both VTsIK and Sovnarkom fronted for that pervasive ghost in the machine, the Bolshevik Party, itself manipulated by its own Central Committee. Strangely enough, there is no direct evidence that the Bolshevik Party (whose Central Committee minutes for the period are available) played any part in the creation of the Vecheka; perhaps this is indicative of the relative lack of importance attached at that moment to the hasty improvisation of yet another investigative commission.

Seen in retrospect, the decision to attach the Vecheka to the Sovnarkom clearly conferred upon it, by virtue of this special status, an autonomy and a flexibility which enhanced its power and its effectiveness. Constitutionally, this relationship harked back to the tradition of the Okhrana's precursor, the Third Section of Nicholas I's Chancellery, directly subordinated to the arbitrary control of the autocracy. By contrast, the Okhrana itself had stood modestly under the more formal and accountable authority of the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior.

DZERZHINSKY—THE FIRST CHEKIST

The selection of Dzerzhinsky to head the Vecheka was very natural, indeed self-evident. The Sovnarkom meeting on 6 December, having decided to form a commission for the suppression of the menacing strike, was considering the choice of its chairman, when Lenin remarked: 'We must find a staunch proletarian Jacobin';[182] Lunacharskii and Kuzmin thereupon proposed Dzerzhinsky's candidature.[183] In similar vein Bonch-Bruevich has described how, in the first days of December, he had to report a series of subversive incidents to Lenin, who exclaimed: 'Surely we shall not fail to find our own Fouquier Tinville who will be able to tame the encroaching counter-revolution?'[184] And, as Bonch-Bruevich put it, the Fouquier Tinville of the Russian Revolution materialised in the person of Felix Dzerzhinsky. Fortunately for Lenin, Dzerzhinsky came to combine the moral fervour of a Fouquier Tinville with the professional expertise—though not the political finesse—of Joseph Fouché, Napoleon's legendary chief of police.

Dzerzhinsky was admirably fitted to command the Vecheka. Although neither a Russian (he always spoke Russian with a Polish accent)[185] nor one of Lenin's Old Bolsheviks, he was nevertheless a veteran Marxist revolutionary with a record second to none. Born on 30 August (11 September) 1877 into the Polish intelligentsia-cum-landed gentry,[186] he attended a high school (gymnasium) in Vilna,[187] centre of a Polish-Lithuanian province under Tsarist rule. He rebelled early, joining in the autumn of 1895 the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP), a Marxist organisation formed that year. In April 1896, conflict with the school authorities[188] led him to exchange his unfinished studies for the exacting, turbulent, and hunted existence of a professional revolutionary. Not quite forty when, on 1 March 1917, the February Revolution freed him from Moscow's Butyrki gaol, he had by then spent a quarter of his life—over eleven years (three of them doing hard labour)—in Tsarist

prisons or Siberian exile.[189] His first two stints of prison and exile—17 July 1897 to 28 August 1899, and 23 January 1900 to 12 June 1902—both ended in escape from Siberia.[190] This pattern of arrest, imprisonment, and escape or release, followed by return to intensive revolutionary activity, characterised Dzerzhinsky's life up to 1917, with only two significant periods at liberty: June 1902—July 1905, and late 1909—September 1912.[191]

Dzerzhinsky became one of the Bolshevik Old Guard only by adoption; he joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917, but gained retrospective Party membership dating back to 1895,[192] the time of his entry into the (Lithuanian) social democratic movement, though he himself evidently preferred to date it from 1906[193]—the year of his admission as an SDKPiL representative to the Central Committee of the united RSDRP. All his pre-1917 revolutionary work had been effected in the cause, first, during 1895–7, of the LSDP,[194] and then, from 1900 onwards, of the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL),[195] whose operation was restricted to Polish and Lithuanian Tsarist-ruled territory. The basis for the formation of the SDKPiL was laid in late December 1899 at a conference in Vilna, arranged by Dzerzhinsky, between (i) the left wing of the LSDP, (ii) the Workers' Association—a splinter group of the LSDP, and (iii) the Union of Social Democratic Workers of Poland, which Dzerzhinsky had organised in Warsaw after his first escape from Siberia. The conference participants agreed upon a fusion of these tenuous parties, and issued a joint draft programme; Dzerzhinsky was elected to the central committee of the resulting embryonic, and as yet unnamed organisation which developed into the SDKPiL during 1900, when Dzerzhinsky was again in prison.[196] Thus Dzerzhinsky, then aged 23, figured as one of the SDKPiL's founding fathers.

The SDKPiL represented the continuation of the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland (SDKP), which had been founded by Rosa Luxemburg in 1893 after seceding from the Polish Socialist Party (PPS)—itself founded in 1892–3.[197] The PPS aspired to socialism in an independent Poland liberated from the three partitioning powers, and meanwhile it promoted co-operation between the Polish socialist parties of the three occupied territories. By contrast the SDKP and its successor, the SDKPiL, stood for the wider unity of the international proletarian class, and, as a first step, advocated its own fusion with its Russian Marxist counterpart within the Tsarist Empire, the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDRP). The SDKPiL thus substituted the notion of class

allegiance for the traditional loyalty of national patriotism; disparagingly, it dubbed its PPS rivals 'social patriots'. Not surprisingly, it made little headway in partitioned Poland, whilst the PPS prospered.

Although raised in a deeply patriotic and religious family environment (in childhood he longed to be a Roman Catholic priest),[198] and nurtured on Poland's romantic poets, Dzerzhinsky nevertheless became an intransigent opponent of national self-determination and of the aim of an independent Poland. Whilst he proved a remarkably consistent supporter of Lenin on most issues, even in pre-1917 days, nevertheless on this key SDKPiL supra-national principle, fashioned and cherished by Rosa Luxemburg, Dzerzhinsky clashed with Lenin, notably at the Seventh Bolshevik Party Conference in Petrograd, in April 1917.[199] He would again cross Lenin on this issue in December 1922, in the context of Georgian independence.[200]

Marx and Engels had specifically favoured national self-determination for Poland; Lenin, for his part, shrewdly realised that, in present conditions, socialism could only be made palatable to the Poles, and to other national minorities of the Tsarist Empire, if it were combined with the attraction of independence rather than autonomy. But the leadership of the SDKPiL was made in another mould. Its acknowledged leader was Rosa Luxemburg, celebrated for her intellectual brilliance and her political passion. In concert with her Polish fellow-émigrés in Western Europe, Leo Jogiches (alias Tyshko, in Polish Tyszka), Iu. Markhlevskii (in Polish, Julian Marchlewski, alias Jan Karski), and A. Varshavskii (in Polish, Adolf Warszawski, alias Warski), she directed the policies of the SDKPiL, whose campaigns inside Poland were led by such men as Dzerzhinsky, I. S. Unshlikht (Józef Unszlicht, alias Jurowski), I. S. Ganetskii (Hanecki, alias of Jakub Fürstenberg), and Karl Radek (alias of Karol Sobelsohn). The last four were to achieve positions of importance in revolutionary Russia. Of these eight SDKPiL leaders, all—except Dzerzhinsky and Markhlevskii—belonged to the alienated intelligentsia of Polish Jewry, whose 'neurosis of national dispersion and oppression'[201] contributed to inspire the internationalist outlook of their movement. Significantly Dzerzhinsky grew up, as did Jogiches and Martov, in cosmopolitan Vilna, a Russian-administered Polish-Lithuanian city with a strong Jewish element, and at that time the focal point of socialist ferment in Tsarist Russia.[202] Dzerzhinsky came under the influence of Martov,[203] future leader of the Menshevik Party, by whom he was introduced into Jewish circles, both

proletarian and of the intelligentsia; he made many Jewish friends and zealously learned Yiddish. The Bund—Jewish social democratic workers' organization in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia, founded in 1897—helped Dzerzhinsky in his political activity, for instance in Warsaw in late 1899.[204]

Dzerzhinsky's close friend and schoolmate in Vilna was Mikhail Goldman[205] who, under the name Mark Liber, was to gain prominence as a Bundist and later as a Menshevik.[206] Goldman's sister, Julia, was for several years Dzerzhinsky's romantic love, and was regarded as his fiancée, or even as his wife.[207] After her death of tuberculosis in Switzerland, Dzerzhinsky formed a deeply romantic attachment, lasting from 1905 to early 1910, for another Jewish woman, Sabina Feinstein, sister of a prominent SDKPiL member.[208] Very soon afterwards, in November 1910, Dzerzhinsky married Sofia Sigizmundovna née Mushkat, who was likewise Jewish; born in Warsaw into the bourgeoisie-intelligentsia, she first met Felix Dzerzhinsky in 1905 on an SDKPiL assignment.[209] Given the climate of anti-Semitic discrimination prevailing in Tsarist-ruled Poland, the semi-aristocratic Dzerzhinsky's intimate associations with Jewesses were as socially non-conforming as his convictions were politically revolutionary. These attachments emphasised yet further his identification with, and championship of, the underprivileged and the oppressed, and they deepened his alienation from the milieu of his social origin.[210]

During the years 1900–12, Dzerzhinsky, besides being in the innermost policy councils of the SDKPiL, was one of the foremost initiators and executants of SDKPiL underground activity, slipping in and out of Tsarist-ruled Poland, producing, smuggling and distributing revolutionary literature, organising strikes and demonstrations. He first met Lenin, as also Stalin, in 1906, when attending the Fourth RSDRP (Unity) Congress in Stockholm; as a result of the ensuing, albeit temporary, union between the RSDRP and the SDKPiL, Dzerzhinsky was elected to the RSDRP Central Committee as an SDKPiL representative, and was re-elected, in his absence, at the Fifth RSDRP Congress in 1907. He also attended the Third and Fourth RSDRP Conferences in Finland that year.[211] After the SDKPiL split in 1911 between the Central Committee leadership in Berlin—Rosa Luxemburg, Jogiches, and others—and the opposition inside Poland—led by Ganetskii, Unshlikht, etc.—Dzerzhinsky sided in principle with the Central Committee, especially on the issue of Polish independence, but in other matters took the opposition line of support for Lenin in the latter's internal splitting tactics within the

RSDRP; Dzerzhinsky was Lenin's closest ally among the Poles with regard to Russian affairs, and went so far as to write that his heart was 'completely Bolshevik'.[212]

Upon release from gaol in Moscow on 1 March 1917 (he had been in prison since September 1912), Dzerzhinsky instantly immersed himself in Bolshevik Party activity, initially in the capacity of an SDKPiL delegate. He served in the Bolshevik Party's Moscow Committee, on whose Executive Committee he sat, and which he represented at the Seventh Bolshevik Party Conference in April 1917; the Conference recommended him for election to the Bolshevik Party Central Committee, but Dzerzhinsky declined this honour on the grounds that his health had been impaired by long imprisonment. However, at the Party's Sixth Congress, 26 July–3 August 1917, he was elected to the Party's Central Committee, of which he would remain a member until his death, and whose Secretariat he briefly joined on 6 August. He was much involved in preparations for the Bolshevik *coup d'état*. As early as mid-April he headed a special commission of the Party's Moscow Committee, whose task it was to develop the Bolshevik Military Organisation in the army and to build the Red Guard within the Moscow region. After the Sixth Party Congress, Dzerzhinsky remained in Petrograd, at the heart of the Bolshevik conspiracy; he played a major part in raising the Red Guard, and in mobilising the Petrograd garrison troops to repel the Kornilov incursion. He helped to maintain contact with the fugitive Lenin, visiting his Razliv hide-out.[213]

A member of the 'restricted' inner caucus of the Bolshevik Central Committee as from 5 August,[214] Dzerzhinsky participated in its historic meeting on 10 (23) October, which decided in principle to mount an armed rising. It was at this meeting that a 'Politburo' was first formed, on a motion proposed by Dzerzhinsky, who defined its purpose as 'political guidance for the immediate future'. Elected to it were: Lenin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Stalin, Sokolnikov, and Bubnov.[215] But, as attested by Trotsky: 'This new institution turned out [to be] completely impracticable.... The political bureau in its October membership never once assembled, and it was simply forgotten.'[216] On 16 October, Lenin again addressed the Party Central Committee on the necessity of an insurrection;[217] the meeting elected a Military Revolutionary Centre, consisting of Bubnov, Dzerzhinsky, Sverdlov, Stalin, and Uritskii, which was to direct the rising and which should 'form an integral part of the Revolutionary Committee of the Soviet', i.e. of the Military Revolutionary Committee.[218] However, there is no evidence that this Party Centre, which has been

represented by Soviet historians as the 'directing nucleus of the Military Revolutionary Committee in the preparation and execution of the armed rising',[219] played any part in the organisation of the *coup d'état*; it is Trotsky's contention that the Military Revolutionary Centre's importance was deliberately inflated after 1924 in order to support the legend of Stalin's vital role in the October Revolution.[220]

Dzerzhinsky's part in the actual Bolshevik Rising was a prominent one; he was specifically responsible for defence of the Smolny Institute and capture of the central post and telegraph offices.[221] At the Second Congress of Soviets—where he welcomed the Revolution in the name of the SDKPiL—Dzerzhinsky was elected to the Congress's All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK), which office he retained through successive Congresses until his death in 1926.[222]

During October-November 1917, Dzerzhinsky was active on many fronts, both within the Military Revolutionary Committee and outside it; following the foundation of the Vecheka, he concentrated his energies on building up this one organisation. He involved himself personally in recruiting its staff, in training them while at work, in directing their operations, in interrogating suspects and investigating conspiracies.[223] Here he could draw on his considerable experience of underground work. His widow has testified to his extreme security-mindedness as a revolutionary, to his careful analyses of the causes of every conspiratorial setback, with a view to uncovering Okhrana agents within his party's ranks, particularly during the period 1910–12: 'he personally investigated such matters, and a number of *agents provocateurs* were unmasked thanks to his efforts'.[224] The claim that Dzerzhinsky personally exposed Okhrana agents lacks specific confirmation. Certainly, in early 1910, he had advocated the creation of a special commission to investigate provocation within the SDKPiL party,[225] and had participated in setting up such a commission a year later, in Kraków; ironically, this led to Dzerzhinsky mistakenly accusing Unshlikht (his future deputy in the Vecheka and GPU) of working for the Okhrana.[226] At all events now, faced with the task of erecting an internal security system for the victorious revolution, Dzerzhinsky, poacher turned gamekeeper, had found his métier. In his hands the Vecheka would amply earn its sobriquet of 'shield and sword of the revolution'.

Chapter II

Organisational Development, Phase I: Improvisation *(December 1917–July 1918)*

> At the present time, by reason of external and internal conditions, we are faced with the prospect of a colossal increase in our work, both quantitatively and qualitatively.... On the completeness, the intensity and the timeliness of the measures adopted by the Vecheka could depend the very existence of the Soviet Republic.
>
> Dzerzhinsky's letter of 29 April 1918
> to the Presidium of VTsIK, in Belov, pp. 112–13

The organisational apex of the Vecheka was its Collegium, a directing board headed by a chairman or president (*predsedatel*). Dzerzhinsky presided as Chairman over the Vecheka and its successors, the GPU and OGPU, continuously until his death in harness in July 1926, except for an interlude of six weeks immediately after the Rising of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries on 6 July 1918 when, during Dzerzhinsky's self-sought suspension, Peters temporarily replaced him as Chairman.

The first Collegium meeting took place on the day of the Vecheka's foundation, 7(20) December 1917.[1] It was attended by Dzerzhinsky, Ksenofontov, Averin, Sergo (pseudonym of Ordzhonikidze), K. A. Peterson, Peters, Evseev, and Trifonov.[2] All eight men, plus two others who did not attend—Zhedilev and Vasilevskii—were named as Collegium members in the minutes of the Sovnarkom resolution of 7 December.[3] Zhedilev was in fact N. A. Zhidelev, a secretary of the first NKVD Collegium.[4] The Vecheka Collegium met only once in this initial combination; the next day several members of the original team were transferred to other duties,[5] the survivors being Dzerzhinsky, Peters, Ksenofontov, and Evseev. The Collegium was thereupon reinforced by the accession of Fomin, Shchukin, Ilin, and Chernov.[6] Other reported (but not conclusively established) additions on 8 December were Menzhinsky, Smirnov, and Iakovlev.[7]

A smaller body than the Vecheka Collegium was its Presidium, which functioned as an inner cabinet when high-level or urgent decisions were required; comparatively little evidence has surfaced

concerning it.[8] The first Vecheka Presidium, formed on 8 December 1917, reportedly consisted of five members: Dzerzhinsky as Chairman, Zhidelev and Iakovlev as his deputies (both highly unlikely appointments), with Peters and Ksenofontov as secretaries.[9] Thereafter Zhidelev and Iakovlev disappeared from sight in the Vecheka and, surprisingly, Dzerzhinsky's only other known deputies up to 6 July 1918 were two LSRs: Aleksandrovich, appointed on 8 January,[10] and Zaks, appointed in March.[11] Ksenofontov and the LSR, I. I. Ilin, became joint secretaries of the Collegium;[12] Peters acted as treasurer.[13]

For the first few days the Vecheka operated in the Smolny Institute, before moving into the *Gradonachalstvo* building at Gorokhovaia 2,[14] from where Dzerzhinsky had already been directing some of his security work under the Military Revolutionary Committee, and where he now established Vecheka headquarters. Symbolically, it was an unfortunate choice. Apart from the City Governor's offices, the building had housed the Department of Police, complete with gaol, so that future political prisoners of the Bolsheviks, including—such are the ironies of history—fellow-Marxist Mensheviks, would be able to compare the amenities of the notorious Gorokhovaia prison cells as dispensed respectively by the Tsarist Okhrana and the Communist Cheka.[15] Gorokhovaia is now named Dzerzhinsky Street.[16]

Gorokhovaia 2 was also the location of the Commission for the Security of Petrograd, created on 22 November on Dzerzhinsky's initiative; its chairman was K. E. Voroshilov, future first Marshal of the Soviet Union (1935) and prominent politician (Politburo member, 1926–60). Very close working contact was maintained between Voroshilov and Dzerzhinsky in those early weeks; the latter co-opted the former onto the Vecheka Collegium, with the assent of government and Party Central Committee.[17] The association did not last long; in late February 1918 Voroshilov was despatched to the Ukraine, there to start his long and imposing politico-military career.

On 10 December, *Izvestia* announced that the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, attached to the Council of People's Commissars, had been established by the latter's resolution of 7 December 1917, and was located at Gorokhovaia 2, with reception hours from 12 noon to 5 p.m.[18] Soviet historians of the Vecheka have made much of this press announcement in order to demonstrate that, from the very first, the Vecheka relied on broad public support—especially from workers and peasants—in its struggle against counter-revolution.[19] This

became a constantly recurring refrain: the Vecheka's successes in uncovering conspiracies were repeatedly ascribed to the zeal of individual members of the proletariat in bringing information to the Vecheka. Henceforward the Vecheka frequently used the columns of the Soviet press, and especially of *Izvestia*, to publish appeals for public co-operation, to issue stern warnings, to announce various security measures, and to proclaim its triumphs.[20] A characteristic early Vecheka appeal for information about counter-revolutionary stirrings appeared in *Izvestia* of 15 December 1917.[21]

The Vecheka started from small beginnings. When it moved into Gorokhovaia 2, its entire apparatus consisted of a handful of personnel, and its records fitted into Dzerzhinsky's briefcase. Its financial resources, amounting at first to 1,000, and later to 10,000 roubles were kept by Peters in a table drawer.[22] By the close of 1917, the Vecheka apparently numbered only 23 personnel,[23] but by mid-January 1918 this figure had risen to about 100.[24] During this early period the scanty Vecheka staff were hard pressed, performing multi-purpose duties. One of the earliest recruits was a 17- or 18-year-old girl, Praskovia Ivanovna Putilova, who worked interchangeably as secretary, desk-officer, investigator, and searcher.[25]

As instructed by the Sovnarkom, the Vecheka started by establishing three departments, responsible respectively for (1) acquisition of information, (2) organisational matters, and (3) suppression of counter-revolutionary activity and sabotage. But the scope of its functions was swiftly extended; on 11 December the Collegium decided to form a fourth department, dealing with speculation,[26] and in late January 1918 a special section was added, to deal with misconduct in office, i.e. misuse of official position or authority (*prestuplenie po dolzhnosti*), perpetrated by bank employees.[27] V. R. Menzhinsky was appointed chief of this section.[28]

The Vecheka's official designation underwent various permutations. Originally styled 'The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage', it very soon extended its title to embrace 'speculation', and, a little later, also 'misconduct in office'. Thereafter, its full formal title, rarely used, stood as 'The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Speculation, Sabotage, and Misconduct in Office',[29] though it was often abbreviated, for instance by omission of the word 'sabotage'. (The concept 'sabotage' referred less to the causing of material damage than to more general acts deemed subversive, such as strikes.) Terser titles were also attached to the Vecheka, such as the compendious term 'Vsechrezkom',[30] and it was

also generally and colloquially known as 'Chrezvychaika', or simply as 'Vecheka' or 'Cheka'.

The process of developing the Vecheka's structure was taken further by a Sovnarkom resolution of 31 January 1918, ordering the commission to be reinforced instantly by a 'staff of energetic comrades', and recommending that its operational arm be subdivided into sub-departments concerned respectively with provocation, crime, speculation, and with counter-revolution;[31] this recommendation was added personally by Lenin.[32] By 'provocation' was meant counter-revolutionary activity 'designed to discredit Soviet authority'.[33]

For the Soviet régime these were serious problems. True, the public service strike ('sabotage'), for the suppression of which Lenin had launched the Vecheka, petered out during January owing to exhaustion of strike funds[34] and, no doubt, to decisive action taken by Dzerzhinsky. However, in prevailing conditions of breakdown of law and order and wartime economic scarcities, banditry flourished and profiteering ('speculation'), in the shape of barter and black market operations, assumed huge dimensions. Conveniently, the Vecheka's charter carried responsibility for suppression of 'counter-revolution', a category which could be stretched to cover a multitude of sins of opposition to the Soviet régime.

Opposition to the régime was indeed widespread, even at this early stage. The 'forces of reaction' were arming for a counter-*coup*; in Petrograd, Moscow, and other cities there burgeoned rallying points for the despatch of recruits to swell the Volunteer Armies gathering in the Don country. Resistance was plotted by elements of the outlawed Kadet Party, the bourgeoisie, and the intelligentsia. The Vecheka busily hunted down these various conspiracies. Of the socialist parties, the SRs and Mensheviks, who had been stymied in the *Vikzhel* confrontation and locked out of the Constituent Assembly, were tolerated awhile in 'legal opposition' within VTsIK and the Soviets; they would very soon be squeezed off the political stage and consigned to the ranks of the 'counter-revolutionaries'. Only the Left Socialist Revolutionaries remained in uneasy alliance with the Bolsheviks, co-operating in a coalition government from mid-December 1917 until mid-March 1918, when they resigned from the Sovnarkom, though still participating in VTsIK and in the Soviets until their abortive rising on 6 July 1918. Until that date they also retained a significant presence in the Vecheka, to which they were admitted on 8 January 1918, immediately after the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly.

It soon became apparent that, if the Vecheka were to deal effectively with its many problems, it must have wider powers and

practical means of enforcement. The Vecheka rapidly broadened its role to embrace not merely preliminary investigation and preventive action (almost from the first it possessed powers of search and arrest) but also, in late February 1918, summary trial and execution of sentence, including the death penalty. Initially, the burden of enforcement fell mainly on the Red Guard. However, as the Vecheka, under Dzerzhinsky's energetic leadership, gathered momentum, so it acquired practical resources to match its extended powers.

The cornerstone of the Soviet Internal Security Troops of the future was laid when, on 14(27) January 1918, the Sovnarkom instructed Dzerzhinsky to form an armed unit for attachment to the Vecheka; this is the officially accepted date of the foundation of the Vecheka Troops.[35] Previously, on 11(24) December, the Vecheka had taken the decision to have a guard of thirty men,[36] whereupon that number of Red Guards had been put at its disposal;[37] possibly, despite the difference in numbers, this was identical with the detachment of fifty Petrograd workers, formed in December, which, according to another source, was one of the first units to join the Vecheka.[38] On 26 December, these men were reinforced by a detachment of soldiers from the Sveaborg regiment, who had proved themselves in the October *coup*.[39] And on 27 March, this force was augmented by a contingent of seventy-two men from the former Tsarist army's cyclist battalion, who had participated in the assault on the Winter Palace.[40] Then on 31 March, the Vecheka merged these various units into one formation—the Vecheka Combat Detachment (Boevoi Otriad VChK).[41]

Meanwhile, the Vecheka, conscious of its All-Russian responsibilities, had taken the first steps towards establishing branches in the provinces. Just a week after its foundation, the Vecheka, on 15 December, published in *Izvestia* a message from VTsIK 'to all Soviets', encouraging them to begin the immediate organisation of local extraordinary commissions for combating counter-revolution.[42] A further urgent request to all Soviets to form local Chekas was included in the Vecheka's circular telegram published on 23 February 1918 in *Izvestia*.[43] However, the process of building these Cheka branches was initially very slow and haphazard. Now that the local Soviets had inherited from Military Revolutionary Committees the responsibility for security in the provinces, as specified in the NKVD's instruction of 24 December 1917—'Concerning the rights and duties of Soviets',[44] they developed a diversity of departments, committees, and commissions for combating counter-revolution, supported by Red Guard units.[45] Not until it transferred to Moscow in mid-March 1918,

did the Vecheka begin to bring this heterogeneous collection of improvised bodies under systematic control. This coincided with the growing centralisation of the entire Soviet apparatus, at the expense of local authorities; whereas in October the cry had been, for tactical reasons on Lenin's part, 'All power to the Soviets', once power was won the Bolsheviks tended increasingly to concentrate it in the hands of central government. The Bolsheviks could plead persuasively that such a strengthening of central authority was necessitated by the crisis of counter-revolution and civil war, but the centripetal development of Bolshevik government possessed an inner logic which outlasted the conditions of War Communism; it was implicit in Lenin's concept of a strictly disciplined authoritarian party implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat, a party itself subjected to rigid 'democratic centralism'.

An armistice had been concluded with the German High Command on 2(15) December, followed, after protracted negotiations, by the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed on 3 March and ratified by the Fourth Congress of Soviets on 15 March 1918. Under its humiliating terms, the Bolsheviks ceded huge territories in the west and south, including the Ukraine. This painful surgery gained Lenin his vital breathing space, which he used to consolidate his grip on areas under his nominal control.

Petrograd, exposed to the advancing German army, had meanwhile proved too vulnerable to serve as a seat of government, and on 10-12 March 1918 the people's commissariats were evacuated to the safety of Moscow, which recovered the status of Russia's capital city. Surprisingly, security arrangements for the move were in the hands not of the Vecheka but of Bonch-Bruevich, whose Investigation Commission (known earlier as the Committee to Combat Pogroms) was energetically continuing to suppress disorder and subversion. At one stage Lenin had drafted a resolution recommending that the commissions headed by Dzerzhinsky and Bonch-Bruevich should be reorganised and merged, but when, after hearing reports by the two men on the activities of their respective commissions, the Sovnarkom approved the resolution on 31 January, the specific merger proposal was omitted.[46]

Before the government's move to Moscow, Bonch-Bruevich carried out the preventive arrest of the most dangerous suspects in Petrograd, catching many of them in possession of arms, bombs, and compromising documents. He then wound up his commission, handing over in part to the Commissar for Justice, and in part to Dzerzhinsky, who, as Bonch-Bruevich somewhat disparagingly put it, 'had only just

started to activate the Vecheka apparatus'.[47] Bonch-Bruevich may have exaggerated his own commission's achievements; at all events Soviet historians have paid scant tribute to his security contribution, dwelling instead on his role as director of the Sovnarkom's administrative office.

Bonch-Bruevich organised the exodus to Moscow in great secrecy; his elaborate security precautions included a deception plan designed to mislead even *Vikzhel* as regards the timing and destination of the expedition. The government slipped away from Petrograd by train on 10 March, with an escort of Lettish machine gunners, arriving in Moscow on the morrow.[48] The Vecheka, too, transferred its seat to Moscow at this moment.[49] A separate Petrograd Cheka was now created, with M. S. Uritskii in charge.[50] On the other hand, the Moscow Cheka, known as the M-Cheka, formed in early March under the auspices of the Moscow Soviet, promptly merged with the Vecheka by the latter's decision of 19 March. Consequently, the Vecheka was subordinated not only to the Sovnarkom but also, in respect of the M-Cheka component, to the Moscow Soviet.[51] The Vecheka, after brief initial occupation of Sologub's House on Povarskaia Street,[52] established its Moscow headquarters on 30 March[53] at Bolshaia Lubianka No. 11, close to the Kremlin, and formerly occupied by the Iakor (Anchor) Insurance Company and Lloyd's Insurance. (It was not until early December 1920 that Vecheka headquarters moved to Bolshaia Lubianka No. 2, once occupied by the Rossiia Insurance Company.)[54] Within two months of arrival in Moscow the Vecheka had so increased in size that it spread into an adjoining house.

Vecheka headquarters manpower at the time of the move to Moscow stood at approximately 600, increasing to 1,000 by 10 June 1918.[55] These figures comprise only personnel accommodated at Bolshaia Lubianka, including the absorbed M-Cheka staff, but excluding the Vecheka's Combat Detachment, which was stationed separately, in barracks. By contrast, in June 1918 the headquarters staff of the NKVD, responsible for directing the large apparatus of local government through executive committees of the Soviets, totalled only 400 personnel.[56] These official figures of Vecheka strength, whilst undoubtedly correct, strikingly contradict estimates put about by Cheka chroniclers in the 1920s, and faithfully repeated by subsequent historians of the Cheka. Thus Peters wrote that the Vecheka's manpower at mid-March 1918 stood at about 120,[57] whilst Latsis asserted that, during the months following the Vecheka's transfer to Moscow, its apparatus, inclusive of drivers and messengers,

amounted to merely 40, and had not exceeded 120 by early July 1918.[58] Indeed, Latsis specified that 120 covered the Vecheka's entire strength throughout Russia.[59] These excessively modest computations suggest that their authors' intent may have been a deliberate minimisation of the Vecheka's size at this early period, so as to stress its heroic performance in the face of overwhelming odds, and to demonstrate the initial pacific character of the Bolshevik régime.

Dzerzhinsky now set about strengthening the Vecheka's Combat Detachment. On 8 April, he wrote to the Commander of Moscow Military District, stating the Vecheka's imperative need to have at its disposal troops for fighting against counter-revolution.[60] Dzerzhinsky's request may have arisen out of a planned Vecheka strike at Anarchist groups—the so-called Black Guard—which were imposing a reign of lawlessness on the citizens of Moscow.

On the night of 11/12 April, armed Cheka contingents, supported by Lettish troops drawn from the Kremlin guard,[61] surrounded 26 Anarchist strongholds in Moscow and, despite some fierce resistance, forced the occupants to surrender; 12 Chekists reportedly perished, whilst the Anarchists suffered around 40 casualties in dead and wounded, with more than 500 taken prisoner.[62] Robert Bruce Lockhart, the special British diplomatic agent accredited to the Bolshevik Government, has described in his memoirs how, on 12 April, he and Colonel Raymond Robins, head of the American Red Cross Mission, were conducted by Peters, at Dzerzhinsky's invitation, on a tour of the battle areas; he exaggeratedly reported over 100 killed. His vivid account concluded: 'It was an unforgettable scene. The Bolsheviks had taken their first step towards the establishment of discipline.'[63] The Petrograd Cheka carried out similar successful raids, but without bloodshed, against Anarchist centres in that city on 23 April 1918.[64] Dzerzhinsky justified the Vecheka's action against the Anarchists on the grounds that the latter had allegedly been preparing an insurrection, and that in any event most of those arrested proved to be criminal riff-raff; he stressed that the Vecheka had neither the mandate nor the desire to wage war on ideological Anarchists.[65]

As already noted, on 31 March the Vecheka combined its various armed units within a single Combat Detachment, which absorbed fresh reinforcements such as, on 18 April, 'the Red Finnish Detachment', recently arrived from Helsingfors.[66] By the end of April, the Vecheka Combat Detachment numbered 750 riflemen, 50 cavalrymen, 60 machine-gunners, 40 artillerymen, 80 bicyclists, and 3 armoured cars,[67] making 1,000 men in all. In the interim, in February 1918, an armoured car unit had been formed, with Sverdlov's and

Dzerzhinsky's assistance, and was attached to VTsIK, to guard the government. Although this unit was only made over to the Vecheka as late as 1921, it meanwhile carried out tasks for Dzerzhinsky from time to time.[68]

In his letter of 29 April to the VTsIK Presidium, Dzerzhinsky stressed the extreme pressure of duties weighing on Chekists in their struggle against economic subversion and sabotage in government institutions; he furthermore prophesied a colossal increase, both quantitative and qualitative, in the work of the Extraordinary Commission, and he warned that 'on the completeness, the intensity and the timeliness of the measures applied by the Vecheka, could depend the very existence of the Soviet Republic.' Consequently it was essential for the Vecheka to have an infusion of the most responsible and ideologically motivated comrades.[69] This manpower crisis—which Dzerzhinsky emphasised by uncharacteristically admitting his own fatigue—was discussed on 18 May at a Communist Party[70] Central Committee meeting, which decided to strengthen the Vecheka with new comrades, specifically posting, to the department for combating counter-revolution, Latsis from the NKVD and Iakovleva[71] from the Supreme Council of National Economy (VSNKh). Both were appointed to the Vecheka Collegium, in which Iakovleva served from July 1918 until January 1919.[72] Latsis, joining the Vecheka Collegium on 20 May 1918,[73] continued to act as a Collegium member—and Deputy Chairman—[74] of the NKVD in which, from the start, he had headed the department responsible for administration of the local Soviets.[75] His experience in the latter capacity proved an asset when it came to organising territorial Chekas.

Despite the Vecheka's several appeals since mid-December 1917, widely advertised in the press, for all Soviets to set about forming local Chekas, progress was slow. Latsis later claimed that not a single local Cheka had been formed up to March 1918;[76] he may have been correct in the strict sense that such local Chekas as were being created appeared initially under a variety of names and shapes. For instance, in February 1918 the Saratov Provincial Soviet opened a *department* for combating counter-revolution, speculation, and sabotage, headed by commissars M. A. Deich,[77] I. B. Genkin, and M. S. Vengerov; in May 1918 this department was reconstituted as the Saratov Provincial Cheka, and subordinate District Chekas were created.[78] Earlier still, on 22 January, a *department* for combating counter-revolution and speculation had been formed in Minsk (among its members being K. I. Lander, chairman of the Minsk Soviet),

which took prompt action to arrest political opponents and silence the anti-Bolshevik press, but itself closed down in February when Minsk was occupied by the German army.[79]

On 18 March, the Vecheka Collegium voted to establish a systematic network of Chekas in the provinces (*gubernias*) and districts (*uezds*).[80] At the same time the Vecheka's Organisation Department was transformed into the Territorial Liaison (*Inogorodnii*—literally Other-City) Department.[81] The Vecheka followed this up with an announcement in *Izvestia* of 22 March, proposing that all local Soviets should immediately form extraordinary commissions for combating counter-revolution and speculation, with standard nomenclature; these commissions were also to deal with 'misuse of authority and of the press', and were to exercise an exclusive right to carry out arrests, searches, requisitioning and confiscation pertaining to these several categories of offences.[82] Local Chekas were established in the course of April in Viatka, Vitebsk, Tula, Riazan, Simbirsk and, during May, in Orel, Pskov, Kostroma, Mogilev, Kaluga, and Astrakhan.[83]

There followed, on 19 May, a Vecheka call for a conference of all local Chekas, for the purpose of co-ordinating their activities; it was stipulated that conference delegates must be either Communist or LSR Party members.[84] The First All-Russian Conference of Extraordinary Commissions assembled in Moscow during 11–14 June 1918, attended by 66 delegates representing 43 territorial Chekas, and 7 delegates from Vecheka HQ.[85] A *communiqué* recording some of the conference resolutions appeared in *Izvestia* of 21 June; in the context of illegal trafficking in goods (speculation), the conference criticised the shortcomings and disloyalty of the Railway Military Guard and of the Frontier Guard, and proposed that responsibility for security in these domains should be entrusted by the Sovnarkom to the Vecheka; the conference also resolved to publish a Vecheka newspaper entitled *In the Enemy Camp* (*V stane vragov*).[86] This paper never appeared. The Vecheka did, however, publish, over the period 22 September–27 October 1918, six issues of the periodical *The Weekly Bulletin of the Extraordinary Commissions*[87] or *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin*;[88] its publication was heralded by a Vecheka press announcement, on 31 August, that a special weekly periodical would shortly appear, designed to promote organisational liaison between all Chekas of the Soviet Republic, to provide ideological guidance from the centre, and to dispense instruction on current problems.[89]

No publicity was given to other, more detailed resolutions and regulations produced by the First Conference of Chekas. The

substance of one such resolution[90] and of a Top Secret 'Regulation concerning local Extraordinary Commissions', adopted by the conference on 11 June[91] can be combined and summarised as follows. The Vecheka proposed to organise a systematic network of Chekas attached to the Soviet of each region (*oblast*), province, and of the more substantial districts, besides Chekas positioned at focal railway junctions, principal ports, and in the frontier zones. Chekas would also post commissars to represent them in Soviets of lesser districts, at minor border crossing points, etc. Every regional, provincial, district, and frontier Soviet, or its executive committee, should select a group of persons devoted to the revolutionary cause, so as to constitute a local Cheka, appointing one of their number to be its chairman. However, all local Chekas would be strictly subordinated to Vecheka headquarters, working through a chain of command extending upwards from the commissar in a small rural district, via the District Cheka, the Provincial Cheka or Regional Cheka, to the Vecheka itself, which exercised overall control, and whose Chairman was appointed by the Sovnarkom. The decisions of superior Chekas were binding on subordinate ones. Provincial Chekas were defined as higher organs of administrative authority responsible for combating counter-revolution and speculation, and for ensuring order and the strict observance of all Soviet decrees within the area of their competence, also, subject to Sovnarkom assent, for seeing to railway security; all other agencies previously dealing with counter-revolution and speculation should be dissolved, and their responsibilities transferred to the Chekas. A special corps of internal security troops should stand at the sole disposal of the Chekas, to uphold Soviet authority and to guard railways throughout the country.

Furthermore, the Provincial Chekas' duties included close scrutiny of the bourgeoisie, control of travellers crossing the frontiers, investigation of fugitives from justice, surveillance of foreign intelligence agents, the institution of inquiries into crimes against the state, etc. In the event of counter-revolutionary disturbances, the Provincial Chekas were authorised to recommend to their Soviets the introduction of a state of emergency throughout the province, to issue mandatory instructions regarding law and order, and to subject offenders and suspects to searches, fines, and administrative arrest. Cheka commissars at district and smaller rural district level were charged with similar if appropriately less responsible tasks. Commissars and all grades of Chekas should report regularly on their activities to their next superior Cheka institution. All local Chekas should use special cyphers for communication with each other and

with the Vecheka. The Vecheka was empowered to regulate the size of local Chekas' budgets and personnel establishments. Provincial Chekas should be divided into five departments, with the following functions (which were further elaborated in the relevant document): (1) combating counter-revolution, (2) combating speculation, (3) combating misuse of authority, (4) territorial liaison, and (5) railway security.

The Provincial Chekas' territorial liaison department was assigned responsibility for guiding and co-ordinating the activities of the Cheka's subordinate territorial organs, including local Railway and Frontier Chekas, for organising inspections and for promoting a steady flow of information, etc. Provincial Chekas' activities should be directed, guided, and assisted by the Vecheka, whose instructions and circulars must be instantly complied with and retained as basic directives. Provincial Chekas had the right to direct and supervise the work of the local Militia.

Ambiguity regarding dual subordination of local Chekas—both to the Vecheka and to local Soviets to which they were administratively attached—contained the seeds of the bitter dissension which was to prevail throughout late 1918 and into 1919 between the Vecheka and the NKVD, since the latter directed the executive committees (*ispolkomy*) of the local Soviets, these executive committees being the local government administrative units within which local Chekas were formally integrated as sub-departments. A circular of June 1918, signed by Latsis in his NKVD capacity, instructed all Soviets to form—within their executive committees—departments of administration containing three sub-departments for (1) information, (2) the Militia, and (3) the Cheka.[92]

Another Top Secret document, entitled Construction of departments of Extraordinary Commissions, was a directive adopted by the conference on 13 June and issued in an amplified version in August 1918 by the Vecheka's territorial liaison department. This laid down, *inter alia*, that each department in a Provincial or District Cheka (depending on the size of the latter) should possess an intelligence unit[93] consisting of commissars responsible for procurement of information on targets of interest, for carrying out arrests, searches, etc. The Cheka's investigators[94] were grouped in an investigation sub-department or collegium,[95] placed at the disposal of the various departments, and this body might conveniently be divided into specialist sections, dealing respectively with speculation, counter-revolution, and misuse of authority.[96]

Other documents formulated, in more detail, the functional

breakdown and tasks of departments/sections at Provincial and District Cheka level. Thus the department for combating counter-revolution was divided into three investigation sections, dealing respectively with (1) the Red Army, (2) monarchists (e.g. important ex-Tsarist officials), the clergy, and (3) political parties (specifically the Kadets, Mensheviks, Right SRs, and Anarchists), trade unions, and nationalist organisations.[97] Similarly, the department's intelligence unit or bureau might be subdivided into separate sections relating to (1) Red Army, (2) Anarchists, (3) monarchists, (4) Right SRs, Kadets, Mensheviks, (5) prisoners of war, (6) the bourgeoisie, and (7) alcohol.[98] The department for combating counter-revolution operated its own bureau for dealing with misuse of the press.[99] Judging by this directive, the LSRs, who participated fully in the work of the Chekas at this time, were prepared to co-operate with the Bolsheviks in the security investigation of the other socialist opposition parties, whose lot they were soon to share.

Such were the initial blueprints for the organisation of the Vecheka's territorial branches. The Vecheka was now resolutely bent upon building a centrally controlled system of Chekas (attached to, but independent of, the apparatus of local government), upon extending its competence into new functional fields such as the security supervision of frontiers and railways, and upon developing an internal security corps, independent of the army. But before these measures could be implemented, the Vecheka was to suffer a severe set-back in July 1918, in the shape of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries' Rising in Moscow, sparked off and carried out by LSR elements operating from within the Vecheka itself.

Chapter III

Lenin, the LSRs, Terror, and Revolutionary Justice (December 1917–July 1918)

> The state is an instrument for coercion. Formerly it was the coercion of the whole people by a handful of moneybags; but we desire to transform the state into an institution for enforcing the will of the people. We want to organise violence in the name of the interests of the workers.
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> Lenin's speech at a VTsIK meeting,
> 21 November 1917.
> Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, p. 110;
> *Pravda*, 22 November 1917

In its first phase of existence, terminated by the Left Socialist Revolutionaries' Rising of 6 July 1918, the Vecheka stood under the restraining influence of the LSRs. The same Sovnarkom session which, on 7 December 1917, established the Vecheka, also virtually concluded the drawn-out negotiations for LSR participation in the hitherto Bolshevik-monopolised government.[1] Although the LSRs had supported the Bolsheviks in the crucial confrontation on 26 October at the Second Congress of Soviets, they had shied away from Lenin's offer of a coalition; they could not bring themselves to condone the unrepresentative character of the Bolshevik government. Still hopeful of a reconciliation with the Right SRs, and of the construction of a broadly based socialist administration, the irresolute LSRs vacillated for six whole weeks until 9 December, when they finally surrendered to Lenin's embrace, agreeing to form a coalition government with the Bolsheviks. Under this arrangement announced on 10 December,[2] several LSR representatives entered the Sovnarkom on 12 December, among them I. Z. Steinberg as People's Commissar for Justice.[3]

LENIN DESTROYS THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Secure in the backing of the LSRs, Lenin was now better equipped to negotiate the next obstacle—the Constituent Assembly. This, the Holy Grail of generations of liberals and revolutionaries, had been an immutable tenet of Social Democratic faith. Upon assuming office, the Provisional Government had undertaken, in its solemn declaration

of 3 March 1917, to take immediate steps to summon a Constituent Assembly; equally, the Second Congress of Soviets had, in its first enactment establishing the Sovnarkom, specifically given the latter a lease to govern 'until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly'. However, in the Central Committee meeting of 10 October, Lenin, advocating an immediate insurrection, had argued that to wait for a Constituent Assembly which, clearly, would not back the Bolsheviks, was senseless and self-defeating for the Party.[4]

Despite Lenin's strong inclination, after the October *coup*, to postpone the Constituent Assembly elections, he was overruled by his Party colleagues,[5] and the elections duly started on the appointed date, 12 November. Though early returns of balloting from industrial centres favoured the Bolsheviks, by 22 November the count from agricultural areas began to show a swing to the SRs, who by 26 November had moved into the lead.[6] In all, some 707 deputies were elected, including 370 SRs, 40 LSRs, 175 Bolsheviks, and only 16 Mensheviks;[7] this overall majority conferred upon the SRs a mandate to govern the country and to shape its constitution. Lenin, however, had other ideas. In his theses published in October 1915, he had significantly commented that the real crux of calling a Constituent Assembly was: who would be in power when the elections took place?[8] It was Lenin who now commanded the big battalions; the Bolsheviks alone disposed of armed forces within reach of Petrograd, and they enjoyed strong support in large industrial cities. As Lenin later observed, the Bolsheviks had 'an overwhelming preponderance of power at the decisive moment in the decisive points'.[9]

On 13 December, Lenin published anonymously in *Pravda* his 'Theses on the Constituent Assembly' in which he uncompromisingly asserted that, just as in a bourgeois republic the highest form of democracy was the Constituent Assembly, so in a revolutionary social democracy the highest form of democracy was represented by a republic of Soviets. Consequently the 'true will and interest of the toiling and exploited classes' would best be served if the Constituent Assembly accepted Soviet power unconditionally; any other course would be treason to the proletariat and would provoke a crisis which could only be solved by revolutionary means.[10] Then, in a signed *Pravda* article, published on 22 December, Lenin quoted approvingly from Plekhanov's speech at the Second RSDRP Congress in 1903:

> The success of the revolution is the highest law. And if, for the success of the revolution, it were necessary to restrict temporarily the operation of this or that democratic principle, then it would be heinous to hesitate to apply such a limitation. ... The revolutionary proletariat could curtail the political rights of

the higher classes in the same way as they had previously curtailed its rights. The suitability of such a measure could only be judged from the standpoint of the rule: *salus revolutionis suprema lex*. And we ought to adopt this attitude also on the question of the life-span of parliaments. If in a burst of enthusiasm the people has elected a very good parliament ... then we ought to make it a long parliament, and if the elections have not proved a success, then we should seek to disperse parliament not after two years but, if possible, after two weeks.[11]

Lenin was prompt to follow Plekhanov's advice. Having ascertained from the venerable doyen of the LSRs, Mark Natanson, that his party would support the Bolsheviks in dispersing the Assembly, Lenin set about making practical preparations to that end. He moved the most proletarian-manned of the Lettish regiments to Petrograd, remarking: 'If anything should happen, the *muzhik* might hesitate: here we require proletarian resolution.'[12] Meanwhile, as a precautionary measure, on 23 November M. S. Uritskii had been appointed commissar in charge of the All-Russian Commission for matters concerning elections to the Constituent Assembly,[13] and the arrest was ordered of the Commission's existing personnel on charges of falsification of returns, and other abuses; they were soon released, with the charges unsubstantiated.[14] Uritskii was also appointed commandant of the Tauride Palace where the Constituent Assembly was due to meet.[15] Though already a member of the NKVD Collegium, Uritskii did not join the Vecheka until March 1918; his efficient security arrangements[16] for the convocation of the Assembly—and for its swift dispersal—cannot, therefore, be credited to the Vecheka which, at that time, was too new and small a body to make its mark. To some extent the Vecheka's future role was anticipated on this occasion by Bonch-Bruevich and his Committee for Combating Pogroms, which now disposed of 150 trusty commissars based on Room 75 at Smolny. For the duration of the Constituent Assembly crisis Bonch-Bruevich performed as commandant of Smolny, with responsibility for the whole Smolny-Tauride Palace area, and for government security. In preparation for the Assembly's convocation, Bonch-Bruevich took charge of a battalion of Lettish riflemen, mostly Bolsheviks, and of two companies of sailors—commanded by the Anarchist, Anatolii Zhelezniakov—from the battleship Respublika, 200 of whom he posted at the Tauride Palace.[17] Blagonravov remained commander of the Bolshevik base in the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, with Eremeev as Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd District troops. To forestall any 'counter-revolutionary' disorders planned for 5 January, the date of the

Constituent Assembly's convocation, on 3 January the Extraordinary Commission for the Protection of Petrograd declared the city 'in a state of siege', and warned that armed force would oppose any attempts by counter-revolutionary groups to congregate in the vicinity of the Tauride Palace and Smolny.[18]

In Moscow the Vecheka succeeded in rounding up, on 3 January, 63 SRs, including the SR Party's city committee.[19] In Petrograd, however, the Vecheka was thwarted, as a result of an incident which sparked off a bitter conflict between Steinberg, the new Commissar of Justice, and Dzerzhinsky, who enjoyed Lenin's support. As a precaution against feared Bolshevik violence, a Committee for the Defence of the Constituent Assembly had been formed, co-operating closely with the Military Commission of the Right SR Party.[20] On 18 December, a squad led by Vecheka Collegium member V. V. Fomin, acting on Dzerzhinsky's instructions and with Sovnarkom assent, arrested a number of prominent SRs (including Viktor Chernov)[21] and some Mensheviks (including Tsereteli)[22] as they attended a rally of the Constituent Assembly Defence Committee; among them were various delegates elected to the Constituent Assembly. When, at a Sovnarkom meeting late that night, the LSR, Steinberg, learned from Lenin of the detention and proposed incarceration of these parliamentarians, he sped to the scene and countermanded Dzerzhinsky's order, releasing those arrested. A determined trial of strength ensued between the Commissariat of Justice and the Vecheka.[23]

In the event, the Constituent Assembly met on 5 January 1918; the LSRs and Bolsheviks were outvoted by the Right SR majority, and Chernov was elected to the chair, but after the Bolsheviks, followed by the LSRs, had demonstratively left the meeting, the proceedings at the Tauride Palace were peremptorily closed in the early hours of 6 January by Zhelezniakov, commandant of the Palace guard, on the celebrated excuse: 'The guard is tired.' The delegates were refused readmittance. The Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets thereupon arbitrarily dissolved the Constituent Assembly, and the Workers' and Peasants' Government symbolically shed the word 'Provisional' from its title. And so the Bolsheviks, invoking the Soviets as the supreme repositories of the people's will, usurped the legitimacy which, for a brief moment, had been vested in the Constituent Assembly. Thus ended the sole parliament in the history of Russia to be freely elected on the basis of universal unrestricted franchise and secret ballot. The only blood spilled was when Bolshevik soldiers fired on a crowd of unarmed demonstrators; twenty-one persons were officially admitted

killed—the true number was probably higher.[24] Gorky, writing in *Novaia zhizn* of 9 January 1918, described the incident:

> On January 5, 1918, the unarmed Petersburg democracy—factory and white-collar workers—demonstrated peacefully in honour of the Constituent Assembly. For almost a hundred years the finest Russians have lived by the idea of a Constituent Assembly, a political institution which would give the entire Russian democracy the opportunity freely to express its will. In the struggle for this idea, thousands of the intelligentsia and tens of thousands of workers and peasants have perished in prisons, in exile and at hard labour, on the gallows and by soldiers' bullets. Rivers of blood have been spilled on the sacrificial altar of this sacred idea, and now the 'People's Commissars' have given orders to shoot the democracy which demonstrated in honour of this idea.[25]

The extinction of the Assembly coincided with the killing of Shingarev and Kokoshkin, two prominent and respected Kadets, ex-ministers of the Provisional Government, who, on the night of 6/7 January, were murdered in their hospital beds by Baltic Fleet sailors responsible for guarding them. After initial revulsion, the Bolshevik leaders took the line that this was 'merely an act of political terror', and the perpetrators were not brought to justice.[26] The dispersal of the Constituent Assembly provoked no general protest or disturbance; liberal traditions in Russia were too weak for the emergence, in current conditions, of a viable parliamentary democracy. Lenin expressed satisfaction: 'The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by the Soviet Government means a complete and frank liquidation of the idea of democracy by the idea of a dictatorship. It will serve as a good lesson.'[27]

Although, in defence of delegates to the Constituent Assembly, Steinberg challenged the Cheka's right to carry out political arrests, and otherwise defended his concept of the rule of law against encroachments by the Vecheka and by other investigation commissions, he nevertheless, along with other LSRs, explicitly approved the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, both at the time, and subsequently when, as an émigré, he castigated the Bolsheviks for their rule of terror.[28]

VECHEKA VERSUS COMMISSARIAT OF JUSTICE

The original charter of the Vecheka, demarcated by the Sovnarkom's decision of 7 December, had a constricting character; whilst it allocated to the Vecheka extensive tasks of suppressing 'counter-revolution' and 'sabotage' throughout Russia (to which were added, on 11 December, responsibility for dealing with 'speculation' and, a

little later, with 'misconduct in office'), the only sanctions initially authorised for Vecheka use were, as already noted: confiscation, expropriation, deprivation of ration-cards, and publication of lists of 'enemies of the people'. That the Vecheka did not itself carry out arrests immediately after its creation—perhaps as much owing to the deficiency of resources as to lack of requisite authorisation—is indicated by Lenin's practical message of 8 December to Blagonravov and Bonch-Bruevich: 'The arrests, which are to be carried out according to the instructions of Comrade Peters, have an *exceptionally* big importance and should be effected with great energy. Special measures should be taken to forestall escapes, destruction and concealment of documents, etc.'[29]

Very soon, however, the Vecheka's arsenal was fortified. On 16 December, Steinberg signed a Sovnarkom decree empowering the following investigative and judicial agencies to carry out arrests, searches, seizures, and other investigative acts:

1. The Investigation Commission attached to the Petrograd Soviet. (i.e. the Investigation Commission of the Revolutionary Tribunal attached to the Petrograd Soviet; this Commission was headed by M. Iu. Kozlovskii and P. A. Krasikov—see below.)
2. Investigative organs attached to local Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies.
3. Revolutionary Tribunals of all newly organised judicial bodies.
4. Special investigation commissions:
   (a) The All-Russian Investigation Commission for combating counter-revolution and sabotage, attached to the Council of People's Commissars (i.e. the Vecheka).,
   (b) The Committee for Combating Pogroms, attached to the Central Executive Committee of Soviets (i.e. Bonch-Bruevich's Commission, attached to VTsIK).[30]

This decree demonstrates that, during its début, the Vecheka was far from enjoying a monopoly of security investigation. Moreover, apart from the special agencies listed above, there existed others, such as the Military-Naval Investigation Commission and the Extraordinary Commission for the Protection of Petrograd.[31] By its resolution of 22 March 1918, the Vecheka unilaterally arrogated to itself and its provincial branches the exclusive right to carry out arrests, searches, requisitions, confiscations, etc., in relation to acts of counter-revolution, speculation, and misuse of authority and of the press,[32] but in fact various other bodies, such as the Revolutionary Tribunals and the Militia, continued to take action in this wide field.

As early as 15 December 1917, Steinberg signed a Commissariat of Justice (NKIu) resolution ordering that, pending the establishment of regular judicial-investigative institutions, arrested persons should no longer be delivered to Smolny or to the Revolutionary Tribunal, except under special authorisation; all persons already detained there should be immediately transferred to one of six indicated prisons, attached to which would be temporary investigation commissions (formed by agreement with the Petrograd Soviets) responsible for confirming within forty-eight hours the legality of arrests, or else for releasing the detainees. These commissions were also to verify the legality of arrest of all persons already detained.[33] Steinberg was evidently pressing for the introduction of a legal safeguard analogous to *habeas corpus*. The same day (15 December), Steinberg announced, in a newspaper interview, that he was about to visit Smolny and the Revolutionary Tribunal in order to check on the prisoners there and to release the innocent.[34]

The conflict between Steinberg's Commissariat, with its insistence on observance of legality, and the Vecheka, intent on summarily suppressing opposition to the régime, was precipitated (as recounted above) by Steinberg's release, on 18 December, of the SRs and Mensheviks arrested when attending a rally of the Committee for Defence of the Constituent Assembly. Steinberg's intervention raised an issue of principle as to whether the Vecheka, an organ attached to the Sovnarkom, should be subject to control by other institutions, such as the NKIu. Following a complaint by Dzerzhinsky, the matter was discussed by the Sovnarkom on 19 December, under the heading 'On the demarcation of powers of various commissions'.[35] This was Steinberg's first sight of Dzerzhinsky, 'a tall man with an elongated, nervous, exhausted face, sporting a small Mephistophelian goatee, and quite unable to sit still'.[36]

Dzerzhinsky protested that Steinberg had humiliated the Vecheka, demoralising the overworked Chekists; since the Vecheka was directly subordinated to the Sovnarkom, any conflicts concerning it should be referred to the latter. Lenin, listening silently, penned a draft resolution which, countersigned by Stalin, was circulated round the meeting:[37] 'The Sovnarkom rules that any alterations of decisions taken by Dzerzhinsky's commission, or by other commissions appointed by the Soviets, are only admissible by way of appeal against them to the Sovnarkom, and in no circumstances by personal instructions of the Commissar for Justice.' The draft resolution further asserted that Steinberg's action had been a contravention not only of the rights of the Vecheka but also of the decision, taken by the

Sovnarkom on the evening of 18 December, authorising the detention of those arrested.[38] However, upon Steinberg's threat of resignation, Lenin himself proposed that his own resolution should be filed away without being voted upon; this was agreed.[39] Steinberg then submitted a draft resolution, proposing that the work of various existing investigation commissions should be co-ordinated and closely supervised by the Commissar for Justice, who would be responsible for signing authorisations for the arrest of politically significant persons; conflicts between the commissions and the Commissar to be settled by the Sovnarkom. Steinberg's resolution was adopted the same day, 19 December, but only after extensive emendation by Lenin, as indicated by emphases below:

> All the various existing investigation commissions, *including the commissions of Dzerzhinsky, Bonch-Bruevich, Kozlovskii, and the military-naval commission,* should be systematised, *for which purpose the People's Commissar for Justice, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs and other Commissars by whom the commissions are supervised, should consult among themselves and submit appropriate proposals to the Sovnarkom.*[40]

Steinberg realised that, by introducing the Commissar for Internal Affairs into the equation, Lenin was weighting the scales against the NKIu: 'Ever since Adam's day, the police has loved the Minister of the Interior and not justice' was Steinberg's wry reflection. However, the concession was unavoidable. During the discussion Dzerzhinsky had betrayed his lack of political acumen by not grasping that, through his arrest the preceding day of two Bundist leaders, he had committed a gaffe; Steinberg noted that Dzerzhinsky was already adopting the Chekist habit of consigning all opponents to prison.[41]

Two days later, on 21 December, the Sovnarkom debated a further resolution drafted by Steinberg on the same issue, postulating that the Vecheka should (paragraph 2) transmit the results of its work to the Investigation Commission attached to the Revolutionary Tribunal, or else drop the case; (paragraph 3) that its activities should proceed under the closest supervision of the Commissariat of Justice, which (paragraph 5), in conjunction with the Vecheka, should produce a set of instructions for the guidance of the latter; further (paragraph 6), that initiation of action against, and arrest of, members of the Constituent Assembly and other politically significant persons, should be undertaken only with the assent of the Commissariat of Justice; and (paragraph 7), that all detentions should unfailingly be followed by committal for court proceedings or by release.

This resolution was carried, but only after Lenin had injected amendments which altered it almost out of recognition. Lenin laid

down that (paragraph 3) the Vecheka was to be supervised not solely by the NKIu but also by the NKVD and the Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet; (paragraph 5) the NKVD was to participate in the framing of instructions for the Vecheka; the Vecheka was merely to inform (instead of obtaining prior consent of) the NKIu—and the NKVD—concerning politically sensitive arrests; pending settlement by the Sovnarkom of conflicts between commissariats and commissions, disputed measures were to proceed unimpeded.[42] Thus Lenin asserted the Vecheka's effective independence of action *vis-à-vis* the departments of state, stressing its basic subordination solely to the cabinet of the government—the Sovnarkom. Whilst he conceded the NKIu's right to 'supervise' the Vecheka, this discretion was diluted by being shared with other institutions. This was a signal victory for Dzerzhinsky over Steinberg, and a notable milestone on the Vecheka's progress towards arbitrary exercise of authority.

THE LSRs ENTER THE VECHEKA

The next round, however, was won decisively by the NKIu and, indeed, by the LSR Party. On 7 January 1918, the Sovnarkom discussed a conflict between the NKIu and the Vecheka concerning proposals by the former for (a) release of political prisoners against whom no concrete charges had been brought, and (b) introduction into the Vecheka Collegium of LSRs sponsored by their party. Steinberg was afforded satisfaction on both scores: the NKIu was authorised to check the justifiability of detention of political prisoners and to release those against whom no charge could be brought within forty-eight hours of arrest, and, despite Dzerzhinsky's opposition, the Sovnarkom voted in favour of appointing LSRs to Vecheka posts, including that of Vecheka Deputy Chairman, subject only to Sovnarkom endorsement of each LSR nomination.[43] Stubborn negotiation in the Sovnarkom preceded the latter decision, Lenin initially resisting the entry of LSRs into the Vecheka, and then arguing that the selection of LSRs for such postings should be made by Dzerzhinsky personally, not by the LSR Party. But LSR persistence prevailed.[44] Viewed in retrospect, this Bolshevik concession appears astonishing. Arguably it was the unavoidable price of coalition government, being prompted in part as reciprocation for indispensable LSR support in stifling the Constituent Assembly two days earlier, and in part also by the calculation that direct LSR involvement in Vecheka activity might disarm LSR criticism of Bolshevik extra-judicial repression, and bind the LSRs to the Bolshevik cause by ties of compromising complicity.

On 7 January 1918, the Sovnarkom approved the following Bolsheviks as members of the Vecheka Collegium: F. E. Dzerzhinsky, I. K. Ksenofontov, Ia. Kh. Peters, V. V. Fomin, S. E. Shchukin, and V. R. Menzhinsky.[45] The last named, already Deputy (and effectively Acting) People's Commissar for Finance, was promoted full Commissar for Finance on 20 January 1918.[46] In the Vecheka he was appointed head of the section for combating offences committed by bank employees. However when, in mid-March, the government and the Vecheka moved to Moscow, Menzhinsky remained in Petrograd, and in April 1918 (if not before) he severed his connection with the Vecheka upon appointment to Berlin as RSFSR Consul-General.[47] Menzhinsky was to rejoin the Vecheka in September 1919 on what proved to be a permanent basis. At least two other Bolsheviks were Vecheka Collegium members by this time, even though they were not specifically confirmed as such on 7 January: one was D. G. Evseev, appointed to the Collegium on 7 December—he left Vecheka service in November 1918;[48] the other was Chernov, who had already figured in the Collegium at about 8 December, and was still there on 6 July 1918.[49]

On 8 January 1918, the Sovnarkom went on to appoint four LSRs to the Vecheka Collegium: Viacheslav A. Aleksandrovich, alias Petr Alekseevich Dmitrievskii (1884–1918), a peasant from Riazan;[50] Mikhail Filippovich Emelianov (born 1887), a former Black Sea Fleet sailor; Vladimir Dmitrievich Volkov (born 1890); and Petr F. Sidorov (born 1883).[51] Another LSR, I. I. Ilin, had been a Collegium member virtually from the start, and a joint secretary of the Vecheka.[52] After 8 January, other LSRs were presently added to the Collegium, in which they attained near-parity with the Bolsheviks.[53]

Even more astounding than the admission of LSRs to the Vecheka Collegium was their retention there after their party had resigned from the coalition government in mid-March 1918 in protest over the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty with Germany. Dzerzhinsky, having meanwhile become reconciled to the presence of LSRs in his organisation, and being himself overburdened with operational work, permitted his deputy, Aleksandrovich, to exercise day-to-day administrative control over the Vecheka.[54] He had complete confidence in Aleksandrovich, and indeed was personally much attached to him.[55] As Dzerzhinsky later admitted: 'his [*i.e.* Aleksandrovich's] powers were the same as my own; he was authorised to sign all papers, and to issue instructions in my stead'.[56] Furthermore, when, in March 1918, the LSR, G. D. Zaks, joined the Vecheka Collegium, he too was appointed a deputy to Dzerzhinsky.[57]

There is no ready explanation for this enigma, and one can only surmise that Dzerzhinsky's political naïveté and personal credulity were the cause. Certainly it was on Dzerzhinsky that his stand-in, Peters, squarely put the blame.[58] Latsis, too, wrote that Dzerzhinsky misjudged the critical moment of LSR withdrawal from coalition government—a neglect for which he later openly blamed himself at a Sovnarkom meeting. Peters and Latsis, who clashed with the LSRs in the Vecheka Collegium, repeatedly warned Dzerzhinsky that it was impossible to co-operate with the LSRs. Latsis claimed of this oversight: 'This was the only serious error committed by Comrade Dzerzhinsky during his work in the Vecheka.'[59] Steinberg put a different slant on the relationship: he disclosed that when the LSRs were withdrawing from the Sovnarkom, Dzerzhinsky emotionally implored their leader, Maria Spiridonova, to let them stay in the Vecheka, arguing that, deprived of their restraining influence, he would 'no longer be able to tame the bloodthirsty impulses in [the Vecheka's] ranks'.[60]

So, having initially failed in their bid to curb the Vecheka through external restraints, the LSRs succeeded in penetrating the Vecheka fortress itself, where they wielded considerable influence over the next six months. During that period the Vecheka functioned as a Bolshevik-LSR diarchy; consequently, the LSRs must bear their share of responsibility for Vecheka policy and actions under this partnership, but can claim corresponding credit for the Vecheka's relative moderation in applying the death penalty and terror. According to Steinberg, that was the very purpose of their presence there; Aleksandrovich introduced the rule that the death sentence could only be passed by unanimous vote of the Vecheka Collegium, where the LSRs invariably exercised their veto[61]—at any rate in respect of politically motivated offenders, though not of criminals. Besides, while the LSRs remained in the Sovnarkom, up to mid-March, they continued to exert political pressure upon the Vecheka. Peters complained that Steinberg 'impeded every more or less decisive move to combat the enemies of Soviet power, and attempted to bring the Vecheka under his own control. The Left SRs exaggerated the Vecheka's every error and campaigned against its rights.'[62] In Steinberg's own words: 'At the heart of the Government we fought stubbornly to restrict the rights of the Extraordinary Commission ... and to subordinate them to the organs of the People's Commissariat of Justice, i.e. to the law.'[63]

THE INVESTIGATION COMMISSION OF KOZLOVSKII AND KRASIKOV

During the period December 1917–January 1918, the Sovnarkom was obliged, on no less than eleven occasions, to look into various disputes arising out of the NKIu's efforts to impose its direct authority upon the Vecheka and on the Investigation Commission of the Revolutionary Tribunal, attached to the Petrograd Soviet;[64] that Commission was headed by the same pair of Bolshevik lawyers, M. Iu. Kozlovskii and P. A. Krasikov, who had, up to 5 December, directed its immediate predecessor, the Military Investigation Commission of the Military Revolutionary Committee. On 29 November they had both been appointed members of the NKIu Collegium.[65]

The conflict between the LSR Commissar for Justice and his two Bolshevik NKIu subordinates was bitter. At Steinberg's instance, on 11 January 1918 the Sovnarkom appointed a special commission of inquiry to examine the activities of the Investigation Commission, meanwhile suspending from duty several of the latter's principals, including Kozlovskii and Krasikov.[66] Steinberg's indictment against them involved charges of bribery and corruption,[67] which received considerable press publicity.[68] The LSR Petrograd Committee vetoed LSR participation in the Investigation Commission so long as Kozlovskii remained in it. After debating the issue a number of times and taking evidence from the commission of inquiry, on 26 February the Sovnarkom declared the matter closed and the accused members of the Investigation Commission cleared of all charges and reinstated in office.[69] However Zinoviev, chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, refused to readmit Krasikov and Kozlovskii, and in their stead promoted Elena Rozmirovich (wife of N. V. Krylenko) to chair the Investigation Commission.[70]

EARLY CHEKIST MISDEEDS

On 5 March 1918, Steinberg had the satisfaction of reciting, at a Sovnarkom meeting, a catalogue—compiled by the personnel of Rozmirovich's Investigation Commission—of offences committed by Cheka staff in the course of searches and interrogations, such as pilfering, assault, and bribe-taking; Lenin and Trotsky listened in glum silence.[71] Chekist dishonesty was exposed in a *Novaia zhizn* article of 19 April 1918, reporting the misappropriation by a Petrograd Cheka commissar, one Zekin, of cash and playing cards seized from a merchant. Chekist sensitivity to press criticism showed in a Cheka order prohibiting the publication of news relating to its

activities, unless released over the signature of a Cheka Collegium member.[72]

THE VECHEKA'S CHARTER

Meanwhile, on 31 January, the Sovnarkom had passed a resolution defining the competence of the Vecheka in relation to other commissions concerned with investigating counter-revolution, sabotage, and speculation: 'Within the Extraordinary Commission is concentrated all the work of search, suppression, and prevention of crimes, whilst the subsequent conduct of cases, the conduct of investigation, and the presentation of cases for trial, lie within the province of the investigation commission attached to the tribunal.'[73] Thereby the Vecheka was specifically confirmed in its original purpose as being primarily a preliminary investigation agency. In this capacity it did indeed wield certain administrative powers, such as arrest, search, etc., but it was devoid of expressly judicial or substantial punitive functions. However, that limitation was soon to be lifted.

REVOLUTIONARY TERROR

A degree of terror had followed in the wake of the February and October Revolutions. Erupting at naval bases and roving the provinces, it represented a spontaneous, elemental discharge of hatred and vengeance on the part of the dark multitudes against the privileged classes. Whilst some 1,315 persons were killed or wounded in the February fighting in Petrograd, elsewhere the February Revolution was virtually bloodless, though in the naval centres of Kronstadt and Helsingfors a number of officers were put to death by their sailors.[74] With the subsequent disintegration of discipline in the mutinous armed forces, lynchings and beatings of officers occurred.[75] Peasant disorders took the form of looting, arson, and murder inflicted upon the landowners.[76] Similarly, the October Revolution involved few direct casualties, with the notable exception of the Moscow fighting, but its aftermath was marked by spasmodic outbreaks of terror. Particularly brutal were the massacres perpetrated by sailors of the Black Sea Fleet in the Crimea, such as the notorious St. Bartholomew's Eve carnage in Evpatoria in mid-January 1918, when some 700 officers and civilians were butchered on board visiting naval vessels, or tortured and drowned,[77] whilst in February about 800 officers and civilians were slaughtered in Sevastopol.[78] On 18 January, Soviet troops occupied Taganrog in the Don Country and, having concluded an armistice with cadets of the local military

school, then proceeded to execute them most cruelly; a batch of fifty were thrown, bound hand and foot, into the blast furnaces of a local factory.[79] These are just a few of the recorded excesses; they were not, in all probability, ordered by the Bolshevik authorities, but neither were they repudiated by them.

From the start Lenin had imposed political oppression: rule by decree, closure of hostile newspapers, forcible suppression of the public service strike, dispersal of the Constituent Assembly. But he had also, more ominously, heralded the advent of revolutionary terror, foreshadowed already in the Sovnarkom decrees of 28[80] and 30[81] November, outlawing the liberal democratic Kadet Party as 'enemies of the people'—a term first introduced by Lenin into the Russian legal and political vocabulary, and freely used thereafter by the Communist régime to deprive not merely individuals but whole parties and classes of their civil rights. In applying terror, the Bolsheviks were very conscious of the traditions of French revolutionary history.[82] Speaking on 1 December at a session of VTsIK, Trotsky warned: 'In not more than a month's time terror will assume very violent forms, after the example of the great French Revolution; the guillotine, and not merely the gaol, will be ready for our enemies', and he jestingly referred to the guillotine as 'that remarkable invention of the French Revolution which makes man shorter by a head'.[83]

In the past, Lenin had always harboured an innate distrust of spontaneity *(stikhiinost)* of the masses—a distrust extending to the industrial proletariat. In his view the masses were incapable of generating, by themselves, more than trade union consciousness; the consciousness productive of initiative in the class struggle could only be imparted from the outside, by an élite drawn from the revolutionary intelligentsia—in other words by the Bolshevik Party, incarnating the vanguard of the proletariat.[84] But now, in the post-October crises provoked by Lenin's deliberate policy of exacerbating class conflict, Lenin's recourse was to reinforce the politically isolated Bolshevik and LSR parties by giving free rein to the spontaneity of the masses in its least attractive aspect—that of mob violence. In December 1917, Lenin launched a campaign of incitement to terror, encouraging the masses to take the law into their own hands, to 'rob the robbers' (i.e. despoil the landowners and the bourgeoisie), to perpetrate 'street justice' (practise lynch law) against 'speculators' (i.e. black marketeers), and in general to engage in fratricidal class carnage in town and village.[85]

Recourse to terror featured prominently in Russian history. Terror had raged in the savage cossack-peasant risings of Stenka Razin and

Pugachev, and in their suppression by the iron hand of autocracy. The Vecheka itself could trace its grim ancestry back to the macabre Oprichnina, that Grand Guignol prototype for the Russian political police, fashioned by Ivan the Terrible. Now Lenin summoned the cruel atavistic terror of the Russias, harnessing it to his purpose. At the end of December, when he was preparing to destroy the Constituent Assembly, Lenin wrote several tracts which expressed his idiosyncratic views on the proper methods for bringing socialism to Russia. He wrote:

> We Marxists ... always knew ... that socialism cannot be 'introduced', that it emerges in the course of the most tense, the most sharp—to the point of frenzy and despair—class struggle and civil war, that between capitalism and socialism there lies the long period of 'birth pangs', that violence is always the midwife of the old society, that to the transition-period from the bourgeois to the socialist society there corresponds a special state (that is, a special system of organised violence against a certain class), namely the dictatorship of the proletariat.'[86]

In another tract, in which he commended the Paris Commune as an example for the Soviets to emulate in introducing socialist methods of work, he recommended: 'Let them shoot on the spot every tenth man guilty of idleness.'[87] Admittedly these two particular tracts were not published at the time, but other of Lenin's comparable sentiments passed straight into speech or print.

Owing to the ravages of war, to the burden of provisioning the armies, to the breakdown of the transport and distribution systems, the rampant inflation, and so forth, food shortages developed in the towns, bringing the spectre of famine. Lenin's remedy was force: force in dealing with private trade, and force in extracting food from the reluctant peasantry. In a speech made on 14 January 1918 before the Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet concerning measures for combating hunger, Lenin criticised the workers of Petrograd for ineffectiveness and urged that the Soviets should organise mass searches in the city:

> The workers and soldiers of Petrograd must realise that no one will help them except themselves. Malpractices are blatant, profiteering is monstrous, but what have the masses of soldiers and peasants done to combat this? Unless the masses are roused to spontaneous action, we won't get anywhere. ... Until we apply terror to speculators—shooting on the spot—we won't get anywhere. Looters should likewise be dealt with resolutely—by shooting on the spot.[88]

On a small scale, summary execution was already the penalty for such offences. For instance, in early December the Petrograd Red Guard promptly shot, after taking a vote, three robbers caught in the act of sharing out their loot.[89] Lenin was concerned to convert such

rough and ready justice into a mass manifestation. Yet at this very time he was encouraging the masses to engage in similar looting and lawlessness as their prerogative, at the expense of the bourgeoisie, the wealthier peasants, and the propertied classes in general. In January, in his address to Party agitators about to be despatched to the provinces, Lenin said:

> You have before you the very difficult task ... of organising the new economic order in the provinces and of establishing on a firm foundation the power of the Soviets. ... Make it clear to the peasants that the *kulaks* and the bloodsuckers must be expropriated in order to bring about a just and equitable distribution of goods. ... The aged Bolshevik who explained to a Cossack the essence of Bolshevism was right. To the Cossack's question: 'Is it true that you, the Bolsheviks, rob?', he replied: 'Yes, we rob the robbers.'[90]

Lenin was privately prepared to take his policy of terror in the class war to extremes, even if he judged it inexpedient to say so publicly at this stage. In conversation with Steinberg, his Commissar for Justice, Lenin expressed himself with remarkable candour: Steinberg, seeing that his opposition to the introduction of a harsh police measure with far-reaching implications of terror was making no headway with Lenin, exclaimed in exasperation, 'Then why do we bother with a Commissariat of Justice? Let's call it frankly the Commissariat for Social Extermination and be done with it!' At which Lenin's face brightened and he replied: 'Well put ... that's exactly what it should be ... but we can't say that.'[91]

LENIN IMPOSES SUMMARY JUSTICE UNDER A STATE OF EMERGENCY

Although a preliminary armistice had been signed with Germany on 22 November (5 December) 1917, subsequent negotiations at Brest-Litovsk had foundered and the German armies resumed a general advance. At this moment of crisis, whilst still intent on making peace with Germany, at whatever cost, in order to salvage the Bolshevik régime, Lenin nevertheless signed, on 21 February 1918, a militant proclamation, subsequently classed as a decree,[92] entitled 'The Socialist Fatherland is in danger', warning the Russian people of the threat of German invasion; in response, the Sovnarkom affirmed its resolve to mobilise all its resources in defence of the Revolution and to apply a scorched earth tactic in the event of retreat. Lenin particularly stressed certain points:

> (5) Workers and peasants of Petrograd, Kiev, and of all cities, townships, villages and hamlets along the front line, should mobilise battalions for digging trenches under the direction of military specialists.

(6) *Into these battalions should be drafted all able-bodied members of the bourgeoisie, both men and women, under Red Guard supervision; those resisting—to be shot.*

(8) *Enemy agents, speculators, thugs, hooligans, counter-revolutionary agitators, German spies, are to be shot on the scene of their crime.* [Emphases in original.]

When Steinberg protested against inclusion of the last paragraph on the grounds that it would spoil the pathos of the proclamation, Lenin exclaimed: 'On the contrary, this is precisely the essence of true revolutionary pathos. Surely you do not imagine that we shall be victorious without applying the most cruel revolutionary terror?'[93] Trotsky attested that at this juncture Lenin took every opportunity to hammer home the lesson of the inevitability of terror.[94]

A Sovnarkom appeal to the working population of all Russia concerning the German offensive, issued on the night of 21 February and also later classed as a decree, was couched in similar terms. A concluding paragraph ran: 'All depraved elements, hooligans, marauders and cowards should be mercilessly expelled from the ranks of the army, and, if they attempt resistance, they should be rubbed off the face of the earth.'[95]

Both edicts, issued as they were in the context of the German offensive, constituted in effect a proclamation of martial law in the military front zone, and lost their validity upon the signing of the peace treaty on 3 March. Unwarranted, therefore, is the contention of the editors of the (1958) collection of documents on the Vecheka that Lenin's declaration 'represented a directive establishing the legal position of the Vecheka and of its local organs. Up to 21 February, the Vecheka's powers were limited. The Vecheka effected preliminary investigation only in so far as this was essential for the prevention of crime. ... This decree gave the Vecheka the right to apply summary justice to active counter-revolutionaries.'[96] For the Vecheka was not even named in these proclamations, which conferred no special entitlement upon it. Nevertheless, as Steinberg put it: 'The manifesto of February 21, 1918, which justified and incited to summary shootings, cleared the way for the Cheka terror'[97]—or at any rate for the first Cheka executions.

THE VECHEKA EXERCISES SUMMARY JUSTICE

The Vecheka, doubtless with Lenin's blessing and clearly with the assent of the LSRs sitting on its Collegium, immediately issued, on 22 February, an impassioned announcement informing all citizens that hitherto it had been magnanimous in dealing with enemies of the

people, but in present circumstances, 'when the hydra of counter-revolution grows daily more insolent', the Vecheka, basing itself upon the Sovnarkom resolution (though, be it noted, extending its application beyond the military front zone), saw 'no alternative to annihilating mercilessly on the scene of their crime all counter-revolutionaries, spies, speculators, thugs, hooligans, saboteurs and other parasites', who would be shot on the spot by Cheka detachments.[98] The Vecheka followed this up with a telegraphic circular of 23 February, breathing hatred against the bourgeoisie and instructing all Soviets to take action in the sense of its announcement.[99] Thus by its pronunciamento of 22 February, the Vecheka, perhaps not unreasonably in the circumstances of Lenin's declaration of martial law, arrogated to itself the right to deal out summary justice. Less reasonably, it continued to dispense such summary justice (albeit still on a minuscule scale) after the occasion which had given rise to it had passed, and still without any legal authority.

No orgy of Chekist bloodletting followed, either in the military zone or on the home front. The deserving victim of the Vecheka's first recorded execution was a Petrograd blackmailer and bandit affecting the title of Prince Eboli; what probably riled the Vecheka more than Eboli's patrician pretensions was his masquerade as a Chekist. On Dzerzhinsky's order he was shot on 24 February 1918.[100] So was his wife[101] or mistress.[102] Latsis, clearly judging that this act of summary justice was not covered by Lenin's proclamation of martial law, admitted frankly that Dzerzhinsky 'had taken a step not anticipated by any decree, not authorised by anyone'. The LSRs at the head of the NKIu, being evidently of the same opinion, raised an outcry and demanded that the question be debated in the Sovnarkom. But Lenin refused, and approved Dzerzhinsky's action. Latsis commented: 'One cannot go against life. In this way life itself legalised the Vecheka's right to summary justice.'[103] The Vecheka quickly followed up the Eboli precedent: four days later it shot two more bandits who, posing as Chekist commissars, had committed a robbery.[104]

Up to 6 July 1918, the Vecheka executed only criminals and spared political adversaries,[105] this restraint being due to the LSRs within the Chekas who, whilst not objecting to the summary execution of criminals, resolutely prevented the execution of 'counter-revolutionaries'.[106] Admittedly, the LSRs were not always united in their counsels; the LSR Zaks, a Vecheka Deputy Chairman, was censured by his party's central committee for having supported the Bolshevik line on executions opposed by the LSRs.[107] As a rule, however, the LSRs who sat in the Vecheka Collegium and in the

Troikas—the three-man Cheka committees dispensing death sentences—consistently vetoed executions (except of criminals), which always required a unanimous vote.[108] In June 1918, an impasse was reached over the case of nine arrested members of Savinkov's clandestine organisation 'Union for Defence of Country and Freedom' (SZRiS),[109] whom the Bolsheviks in the Vecheka insisted on executing, whilst the LSRs objected. The matter was referred to Sverdlov, Chairman of VTsIK, for arbitration. Peters and Latsis presented an ultimatum: 'Either the LSRs go or we go.' But Sverdlov ruled that so long as the LSRs stayed in the government (presumably he meant in VTsIK), they had to stay in the Vecheka.[110]

It was only after the Vecheka had been cleared of the LSRs, in early July 1918, that it was able to develop its work properly 'in the Bolshevik manner',[111] resorting to summary executions of political foes who took up arms against the Soviet Government. Ironically, the LSRs themselves were the first political adversaries to pay the penalty: a group of LSR insurrectionists, including Dzerzhinsky's Vecheka deputy, Aleksandrovich, and other Chekists, were executed immediately after the abortive *putsch* of 6 July 1918. Next, it was the turn of Savinkov's SZRiS conspirators, whom the LSRs could no longer protect.[112]

Latsis has claimed that these political executions carried out by the Vecheka, whilst not sanctioned by law, were authorised under the terms of an undisclosed Bolshevik Party directive which Dzerzhinsky applied as circumstances might dictate; the Party directive—wrote Latsis—was itself based on a *Malyi Sovnarkom* (Small Sovnarkom) resolution, passed in May 1918, though not published at the time.[113] This resolution, adopted on 23 May 1918, declared members of the Kadet Party's Central Committee and of its other leading organs to be 'outside the law' and subject to immediate arrest[114] by Dzerzhinsky's commission, which was now also authorised to arrest members of leading organs of the Right SR and Menshevik Parties; the entire membership of these two parties was anathematised as 'enemies of the people'.[115] One can only speculate that, extending the scope and severity of the Small Sovnarkom resolution, the undisclosed Party directive may have authorised the discretionary *execution* of counter-revolutionaries of all political persuasions, socialists included. However, the only advertised measure adopted at this stage was the joint Bolshevik-LSR resolution of 14 June 1918, expelling Mensheviks and Right and Centre SRs from VTsIK and from local Soviets, all three parties being described as 'counter-revolutionary'.[116]

THE VECHEKA'S WAR ON CRIME

Others besides the LSRs were opposed to summary executions—even of criminals. On 12 March, the day of the Vecheka's installation in Moscow, two Chekists were set upon—and one of them killed—by a gang in a tavern. The Vecheka immediately rounded up the bandits, and Dzerzhinsky personally interrogated the arrested men, some of whom claimed to be ideological Anarchists. That same night seven of the bandits were shot, after being sentenced by the Vecheka Collegium, and next morning's *Izvestia* reported the event.[117] The Moscow Soviet resented such summary justice being meted out on its territory; 'unbelievable as it may now seem', wrote Latsis in 1926, 'in those days there were not a few comrades who placed the principle of personal immunity above the interests of the revolution'.[118] The hostility with which the citizens of Moscow received the Vecheka was aroused by such incidents as the Chekists' intemperate behaviour in a circus; very soon after the Vecheka's arrival in the new capital, some Chekists took exception to satirical sallies, at the régime's expense, indulged in by the celebrated clown Bim-Bom, and they advanced on to the arena to arrest him. At first the audience assumed that this was all part of the performance, but Bim-Bom fled and the Chekists started shooting, a panic ensued in the circus, and the ridiculous episode was long remembered against the humourless Cheka.[119]

Combining closely with the NKVD Militia and the city's criminal investigation department, the Vecheka waged a sustained campaign against banditry in the metropolis,[120] a campaign in which Dzerzhinsky himself and his Chekist lieutenants, Peters, Messing, and Mantsev, prominently participated.[121] On 3 April, declaring that its first task was to ensure the safety, both as regards person and property, of Moscow's citizenry, the Vecheka appealed for the latter's co-operation in defeating lawlessness.[122] Dzerzhinsky later claimed that the Vecheka's mid-April suppression of Anarchist gangs reduced Moscow's crime figures by 80 per cent.[123] In mid-May, the Vecheka set itself the target of systematically extirpating crime in the capital;[124] on 26 July, Vizner, head of the Vecheka's department for combating crime (established as a sub-department by Lenin's Sovnarkom instruction of 31 January 1918),[125] estimated that the incidence of robbery with violence in the city had fallen from ten to between one and two cases per day.[126]

Criminals continued to meet with summary justice at the hands of the Vecheka; on 18 May 1918, *Izvestia* reported the execution by the Vecheka of nine bandits in Moscow, and on 31 May the Vecheka

sentenced three speculators to death.[127] It is not possible to compute accurately the number of Vecheka executions occurring during the period preceding the LSR Rising of 6 July 1918. Latsis credited the Chekas with a total of twenty-two executions over the first six months of 1918,[128] but this figure is obviously too low,[129] and hardly accords with Sverdlov's statement on 6 July 1918, at the Fifth Congress of Soviets:

> Tens of death sentences were pronounced by us in all cities: in Petrograd and in Moscow and in the provinces. And the LSRs took their full share with us, bloodthirsty Communists, in carrying out these sentences. I remind comrades that, as without doubt you are well aware, the Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution pronounced many sentences, which were well publicised and reported in the press; the Left SRs, along with the Bolsheviks, participated fully in all the labours of this Commission, including the executions, and it seems that there is no disagreement between us concerning these executions.[130]

Sverdlov scored a palpable hit when he went on to point out the inconsistency of the LSR position in, on the one hand, advocating and committing summary killings, without formal sentence, yet, on the other hand, protesting against formal death sentences pronounced by a court of law.[131] Spiridonova replied that her party favoured the use of terror, including the murder of important representatives of the oppressive capitalist system; she agreed also that the LSRs had been co-operating in Dzerzhinsky's Commission, and that in present circumstances the struggle had to be fought to the finish. But she condemned the application of the death penalty under the law as an anachronistic relic of the old bourgeois order.[132]

In this respect LSR policy was indeed ambiguous and self-defeating. By condoning the Bolsheviks' incipient rule of terror, outside the law, and by lending their support, even if not unreservedly, to the Vecheka, the LSRs not only compromised themselves morally but also helped to lay the foundations for the limitless Bolshevik terror that was to engulf the whole country and to destroy utterly all opposition parties, including the LSRs themselves. For this lack of vision and moral resolution Steinberg later bitterly reproached his party.[133]

LENIN REINTRODUCES CAPITAL PUNISHMENT UNDER THE LAW

There was a curious ambivalence in the whole Russian tradition, including Bolshevik opinion, on the issue of capital punishment. At the Second Congress of the RSDRP in 1903, a proposal to include the

abolition of the death penalty in the Party programme was rejected by a large majority; however, under the influence of Western nineteenth-century liberal humanitarianism, most Social Democrats came to reverse their position on this issue.[134] Nevertheless, Lenin, who firmly believed in the necessity of terror as an integral element in waging revolution, continued to favour retention of the death penalty. In a pamphlet published just before the October *coup*, he asserted: 'No kind of revolutionary government could dispense with the death penalty as applied to *exploiters* (i.e. landowners and capitalists).'[135]

The death sentence, which was abolished after the February Revolution,[136] was restored by Kerensky in July 1917, its application being limited to the military front.[137] One of the first legislative acts of the Second Congress of Soviets, on the morrow of the Bolshevik *coup d'état*, was the repeal of Kerensky's measure.[138] When Lenin, who had missed this enactment, heard of the decree, his rage knew no bounds. 'Nonsense', he said, 'How can one make a revolution without firing squads?' And when Kamenev, on whose initiative the decree had been introduced, tried to reason with him, explaining that the disputed law was limited to shooting of army deserters, Lenin, unmoved, retorted: 'This is a mistake, an inadmissible weakness, a pacifist illusion.' Eventually he was persuaded that annulment of the new decree would make an unfavourable impression, and he accepted the compromise suggestion that it would be easiest simply to start executions at the front when there was no alternative.[139]

The death penalty under the law was officially restored by the Bolsheviks on 16 June 1918, three months after the LSR withdrawal from the Sovnarkom. In his announcement, the Commissar for Justice, Stuchka, did not explicitly sanction the measure, but casuistically put it that 'Revolutionary Tribunals are not bound by any limitations in their choice of measures to combat counter-revolution, sabotage, etc.'[140] This evasiveness typified Russian moral aversion to the death penalty as a judicial sanction, an aversion that persisted under the Bolshevik régime; Soviet squeamishness showed in the custom of euphemistically referring to it as 'the highest penalty' *(vysshaia mera nakazaniia)*.

The first death sentence to be pronounced by a Revolutionary Tribunal occurred on 21 June 1918 in the case of Admiral Shchastny. The following day, the LSRs attempted, unavailingly, to have the sentence quashed in the VTsIK Presidium[141] and then, in protest, withdrew their representatives from the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal.[142] Shchastny was executed. To palliate the deed, the Deputy

Prosecutor, Krylenko, explained that the Admiral had been condemned not 'to death' but 'to be shot'.[143]

In his pamphlet, 'Down with the Death Penalty', the Menshevik leader, Martov, reviled the Bolsheviks for refusing Shchastny the right to call witnesses. Only Trotsky was heard—as a witness for the prosecution. Martov alleged that the Bolsheviks had decided to introduce the farce of a trial as a preliminary to execution, because they realised that the shooting of people by order of the Extraordinary Commission, or without any order, aroused general indignation.[144]

Lenin expressed his own views on the death penalty in clear terms in a report before the Sovnarkom on 5 July 1918:

> People tell us that when Dzerzhinsky's commission carries out shootings—that's fine, but when a court of law declares openly in the face of the whole nation that a man is a counter-revolutionary and deserves to be shot, then that is reprehensible. People who have attained such hypocrisy are politically dead. No, a revolutionary who does not want to play the hypocrite cannot dispense with the death penalty. There has not been a single revolution, or era of civil war, without executions.[145]

Lenin saw the issue of the death penalty in terms not of morality but of convenience. He put the matter frankly in a speech at a Cheka conference in February 1920: 'For us this question is one of expediency.'[146]

LENIN PROVOKES CIVIL WAR AMONG THE PEASANTRY

Although the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty bought the Bolsheviks a vital breathing space, it lost them huge expanses of Russian territory and did nothing to remove the threat posed by monarchist generals mustering troops in the Caucasus and in the Don country. Late May brought conflict with the Czechoslovak Corps, opening up battle fronts in the east. But the most serious threat continued to be that of hunger, especially after the German occupation of the rich granary of the Ukraine.

Lenin's response to this challenge was to step up the pressure of compulsion and terror. A decree of 9 May 1918 authorised the Food Commisariat to extract from the peasants any grain held by them in excess of quotas set by the Commissariat: 'this grain is in the hands of the *kulaks* and of the rich peasants, in the hands of the village bourgeoisie'. The decree called on 'all working and propertyless peasants to unite immediately for a merciless war on the *kulaks*', and declared all grain hoarders to be 'enemies of the people', subject to sentences of not less than ten years imprisonment, exile, and total confiscation of property.[147] A further decree of 27 May empowered

the Food Commissariat to raise special food detachments *(prodovolstvennye otriady)*, composed of reliable, class-conscious workers, and subordinated to local food committees—themselves under the Food Commissariat—for the forcible collection of food supplies in grain-producing provinces in order to feed the starving cities. The decree specified that the chief purpose of the workers' food detachments was 'to organise the labouring peasantry against the *kulaks*'.[148] Such detachments numbered over 10,000 workers by the end of July,[149] rising to 45,000 by 1920.[150] This system of grain requisitioning in the villages, known as *prodrazverstka*, continued during the years of War Communism, until the introduction of the New Economic Policy in March 1921. Furthermore, by Sovnarkom decree of 4 August 1918, the Food Commissariat was also authorised to operate cordon detachments *(zagraditelnye otriady)* which, stationed at strategic points on rail-, water-, and road-ways, confiscated foodstuffs in excess of a regulation amount carried by persons coming into cities from the countryside. Those suspected of profiteering, or other transgressions, were to be arrested and handed over to the Cheka for ultimate trial by Revolutionary Tribunal.[151]

In support of this campaign, a decree signed on 11 June 1918 established 'Committees of the Poor' (*Komitety Bednoty*, colloquially called *kombedy*) throughout Soviet territory, to assist local food organisations in the task of extracting foodstuffs.[152] By these various measures Lenin deliberately stirred up bitter antagonism between the poorer peasants, wooed by the Bolsheviks, and the richer peasants, whose surplus grain the former helped to requisition, retaining a proportion for their own needs. Sverdlov, in an address to VTsIK in mid-May 1918, put the Bolshevik policy squarely in terms of class war: 'We must place before ourselves most seriously the problem of declassifying the village, of creating in it two opposite hostile camps, setting the poorest layers of the population against the *kulak* elements. Only if we are able to split the village into two camps, to arouse there the same class war as in the cities, only then will we achieve in the villages what we have achieved in the cities.'[153]

Predictably there followed, in July–September 1918, an explosion of peasant insurrections which were suppressed with a display of extreme ferocity on both sides. During that summer, the Bolsheviks could not rely on the loyalty of the locally recruited Soviet Militia, some of whose units refused to put down peasant risings, declaring themselves neutral in such matters, their only duty being to protect the personal safety and possessions of the community.[154] A bitter class war of Lenin's making raged in the villages, a fratricidal war in which

Lenin set the city workers and the poorer peasantry at the throat of the more prosperous peasants.

The politician, Petr Struve, who underwent a conversion from Marxism to Liberalism, claimed to have detected in the young Ulianov of the 1890s an 'abstract social hatred', 'cold political cruelty', and 'indomitable love of power', combined with 'real asceticism'.[155] This cold political cruelty, exercised on a mass scale in the manipulation of the lives of millions, comprising entire social classes, went hand in hand with personal kindnesses to Party comrades, and even to one or two political opponents and critics, notably Martov and Gorky. Maxim Gorky had become Lenin's greatest scourge in the inexorably dwindling opposition press; his articles, entitled 'Untimely Thoughts', in his independent though Menshevik-orientated daily newspaper, *Novaia zhizn*, never failed to criticise Bolshevik excesses, to spotlight Lenin's personal responsibility, to analyse the nature of the Soviet régime, and to predict dire consequences for the doctrinaire policies it pursued.[156]

EXECUTION OF THE ROMANOVS

Gorky's constant fusillade of criticism in *Novaia zhizn* was silenced by the closing down of the newspaper on 16 July 1918, on Lenin's orders.[157] Curiously, this coincided with the killing of ex-Tsar Nicholas II. Although Gorky had no love for the Tsar, he would no doubt have denounced, on moral grounds, the manner of his execution, without the semblance even of a trial. On the night of 16/17 July, the deposed Tsar, Tsaritsa Alexandra, their four daughters, and Tsarevich Alexei, together with four personal attendants, were executed in the mountain city of Ekaterinburg, capital of the Ural Region, to which they had been evacuated from Tobolsk in April. The particularly fierce Bolshevik Ural Regional Soviet, under chairman A. G. Beloborodov[158] (who, in recognition of his services, was to achieve election to the Party Central Committee and to its Orgburo in March 1919, and would be appointed Deputy Chairman of the NKVD in 1921, under Dzerzhinsky), had unanimously sentenced the Imperial family to death, but had been instructed by VTsIK to stage a public trial of the Romanovs in late July, with Trotsky in the role of prosecutor. However, in mid-July the threat to Ekaterinburg by advancing Czechoslovak and White forces prompted the Ural Soviet, with Moscow's assent, to kill the Imperial family secretly, and to destroy their bodies by fire and acid. Such in essence was the Soviet account contributed by P. M. Bykov who, as chairman of the

Ekaterinburg Soviet and member of the Ural Regional Soviet, was a close observer of these events.[159]

A commission of inquiry, appointed soon after the fall of Ekaterinburg to the Whites in late July, established that the eleven victims, assembled near midnight in a basement room, were despatched by revolver shots and finished off with bayonets by Iakov Iurovskii,[160] member of the Ural Regional Cheka Presidium, assisted by ten Chekists, generally referred to as Letts, though five of them were in fact Hungarians, most probably ex-prisoners of war from the Austro-Hungarian army who had been recruited into the Cheka.[161]

Trotsky, returning from the front to Moscow, was told of the execution by Sverdlov. When Trotsky asked: 'And who made the decision?' Sverdlov replied: 'We decided it here. Ilyich believed that we shouldn't leave the Whites a live banner to rally around, especially under the present difficult circumstances.'[162] The same ruthless logic dictated the elimination of almost all the other Romanovs on whom the Bolsheviks could lay their hands. On the night of 12/13 June 1918, the Tsar's younger brother, Grand Duke Mikhail, was kidnapped in Perm by G. I. Miasnikov, chairman of Motokhvili Soviet, accompanied by several workers equipped with documents from the Provincial Cheka, who then shot him in a forest.[163] On the night of 17 July, only twenty-four hours after the execution of the Tsar, the murder occurred at Alapaevsk, near Ekaterinburg, of six more members of the Romanov family, including the Tsaritsa's sister.[164] On 29 January 1919, four Grand Dukes were executed in Petrograd.[165] Long ago, in 1911, Lenin had contemplated with equanimity the wholesale annihilation of the Romanovs; he wrote: 'If in such a cultured country as England, which had never known either a Mongol yoke, bureaucratic oppression, or the tyranny of a military caste, it was necessary to behead one crowned brigand in order to teach kings to be "constitutional" monarchs, then in Russia it is necessary to behead at least one hundred Romanovs to teach their successors not to organise Black-Hundred murders and Jewish pogroms.'[166]

The execution of the Tsar, surviving symbol of the old Russian autocracy, dovetailed neatly with the formal establishment of the new Soviet state; the constitution of the RSFSR Republic, endorsed by the Fifth Congress of Soviets, was enacted on 19 July 1918.

The Vecheka bore no responsibility for the decision to execute the Tsar; in carrying out the execution, the Ural Regional Cheka acted merely as the obedient instrument of the Regional Soviet, which itself obtained prior sanction from Moscow. Nor did the Vecheka instantly

react to the assassination by an SR (Sergeev) in Petrograd, on 20 June 1918, of Volodarskii, Commissar for Press, Agitation, and Propaganda in the Northern Commune.[167] On 26 June, Lenin sent a letter of rebuke to the Chairman of the Petrograd Committee of the Communist Party:

> Comrade Zinoviev! Only today did we hear in the Central Committee that the Petrograd *workers* wanted to reply to Volodarskii's murder by mass terror, and that you (not you personally, but members of the Petrograd Central Committee) restrained them. I emphatically protest! We are compromising ourselves: even in resolutions of the Soviet we threaten mass terror, and when it comes to action, we *obstruct* the *absolutely* correct revolutionary initiative of the masses. This is in-ad-miss-ible! The terrorists will take us for milksops. The time is ultra-martial. It is necessary to encourage the energy and mass-character of the terror against counter-revolutionaries, and especially so in Petrograd, whose example is *decisive*. Greetings. Lenin.[168]

The wounding of Lenin and the assassination of Uritskii on 30 August 1918 were to be the signal for the unleashing of the full-scale and officially proclaimed Red Terror. However, in Steinberg's view, 'the period from March to the end of August 1918 was, without doubt, a period of factual, though unofficial, Red Terror', a terror in which the masses, the Revolutionary Tribunals, the Chekas, the punitive detachments, and military units all played their part.[169] Steinberg understandably saw March 1918 (the time of LSR withdrawal from coalition government) as the start of the terror; a current Soviet historian dates the commencement of terror back to Lenin's incitements to mob rule in January 1918, and considers that the general application of terror was legalised by the Sovnarkom 'decree' of 21 February, under the slogan 'The Socialist Fatherland is in Danger'[170]—at which time the LSRs still shared responsibility for governing. More realistically, perhaps, July might be regarded as the opening month of substantial Bolshevik terror, provoked by the LSR Rising, the Savinkov insurrections, and the spread of peasant revolt.

THE VECHEKA STANDS FOR ORGANISED TERROR

Up to early July 1918 the Vecheka was not yet deeply involved in applying terror; it was still in the process of construction and expansion, its limited resources were committed to tracking down numerous counter-revolutionary conspiracies and to suppressing the mushroom growth of profiteering, and it suffered from LSR restraint within its Collegium. But even in the Collegium there were LSRs who favoured drastic repressive measures, and regarded the Vecheka as an instrument of ruthless revolutionary terror, unimpeded by law, and

subject only to an internal veto. Early in June 1918, Dzerzhinsky and one of his two LSR deputies, Zaks, gave a joint press interview in which they declared:

> The public and the press misunderstand the character and tasks of our Commission. They imagine the struggle waged against counter-revolution to be on the plane of normal state life, and consequently they wail about courts of law, about guarantees, about inquiries, investigations, etc. We have nothing in common with the military-revolutionary tribunal.[171] ... We stand for organised terror—this should be frankly stated—terror being absolutely indispensable in current revolutionary conditions. Our task is to fight against the enemies of the Soviet Government and of the new order of life. Such enemies are our political adversaries, as well as all bandits, rogues, speculators and other criminals who undermine the foundations of socialist authority. Towards these we show no mercy. We terrorise the enemies of the Soviet Government in order to stifle crime at its inception. They err who accuse us of secret killings; the Commission consists of eighteen tested revolutionaries who represent the central committees of the parties[172] and the central executive committee of the Soviets. Execution is only admissible by a unanimous decision of all the Commission members in plenary session. A single dissenting vote suffices to save the life of the accused.[173] [To which Dzerzhinsky added] There was one case when, on the basis of the decree,[174] I executed a robber caught holding a bomb on the scene of the crime. The Commission then protested formally against my action, although, in essence, my decision was wholly approved as being sufficiently justified. This was a single instance over the whole period.[175]
>
> Our strength is that we know neither brother nor friend, and that we treat with special severity any comrades convicted of criminal activity. Consequently our personal reputation stands above suspicion. We judge swiftly. In the majority of cases only a day, or a few days, elapse between seizing a criminal and reaching a verdict on him; however that does not signify that our sentences are not well founded. Of course, even we can make mistakes, but so far there have been no mistakes, as is proved by our records of proceedings. In almost every case the criminals, driven into a corner by the evidence, admit their guilt, and what argument can have greater weight than the personal confession of the accused.[176]

When a newspaper correspondent referred to rumours concerning use of violence during interrogations, Zaks declared that all such allegations were absolutely false. There were serious inaccuracies in these statements by Zaks and Dzerzhinsky: even at this early stage of the Vecheka's existence, prisoners lingered in gaol for weeks and months before being sentenced or released; torture was certainly used by the Chekas later, and possibly this early, too. Moreover, the notion that a man's confession in prison is conclusive proof of his guilt, though encouraged by Prosecutor Vyshinsky during the Moscow trials

of the 1930s, is less than convincing. This revealing press interview was also reported some years later by Karl Radek, in another version:

> In the summer of 1918, Dzerzhinsky gave an interview to representatives of the then still existing bourgeois and petit bourgeois press. They asked him whether he admitted the possibility that the Cheka might err and commit acts of injustice to people. Dzerzhinsky replied: 'The Cheka is not a court of law. The Cheka, like the Red Army, is the defence of the Revolution, and just as the Red Army in the Civil War cannot take account of the fact that it might harm particular individuals but must concern itself solely with the victory of the Revolution over the bourgeoisie, so the Cheka must defend the Revolution and defeat the foe, even if in so doing its sword might chance to fall on innocent heads.'[177]

There is a striking consistency in Dzerzhinsky's views as regards the Vecheka's proper function. In his speech before the Sovnarkom on the occasion of the Vecheka's foundation, Dzerzhinsky had said: 'Do not think that I seek forms of revolutionary justice; we are not now in need of justice. It is war now ... a fight to the finish. ... I demand an organ for the revolutionary settlement of accounts with the counter-revolutionaries.' Similarly now, in June 1918, he was not concerned with justice, only with 'organised terror', in order to destroy, without mercy, the enemies of the régime. He was voicing Lenin's authentic thoughts, speaking Lenin's language. For the consolidation of Lenin's dictatorship of the proletariat, the Vecheka would 'organise' that violence which Lenin saw as the necessary midwife of history, violence unencumbered by bourgeois conventions of law and morality. *Salus revoliutionis suprema lex.*

The Vecheka's hour to step on to the stage of revolution, as the chief protagonist of the Red Terror, had almost struck. First, however, there was the obstacle of the LSRs to be overcome—those high-minded but irresponsible romantics of the revolution, whose support for the Bolshevik régime was becoming less and less dependable.

Chapter IV

The Left Socialist Revolutionary Rising

> The Socialist-Revolutionist and the Social-Democrat ... while aiming at the same end, were never brothers in spirit. ... The S.R.s believed not so much in the collectivity as in the creative powers of individuality. In place of objective necessity and economic determinism, they glorified the revolutionary will to socialism. The Marxists, prosaic, dry, and business-like, are the book-keepers and clerks of the revolution, the S.R.s its prophets, heroes, and poets. ... Like all poets the Left S.R.s are effective in words ... but very seldom possess political wisdom. The Don Quixotes of the revolution, they are attractive in the pages of a novel, but utterly ridiculous in politics. That is why the Bolsheviks hold them in such contempt.
>
> P. Surmin, 'The Poets of Revolution'
> in *Zaria Rossii*, No. 60, 6 July 1918,
> pp. 1–2, quoted in Bunyan, 1936, pp. 222–3

The LSRs, having resigned from the Sovnarkom in mid-March 1918, nevertheless continued to command substantial representation in the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets and in the local Soviets; after mid-June they remained the sole surviving party still tolerated by the Bolsheviks to function freely in political opposition. Idealistic radical Populists that they were, the LSRs saw themselves in the role of co-defenders, with the Bolsheviks, of the Socialist Revolution against the forces of reaction; yet they vociferously condemned the Bolshevik surrender of vast, peasant-populated areas to capitalist Germany, and denounced the Bolshevik policy of exacting grain from the peasantry in order to succour the city proletariat.

The brewing conflict came to a head during the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which met in Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre on 4–10 July 1918. It was attended by 1,275 delegates, of whom 816 were Bolsheviks and 366 LSRs. At the first session, on 4 July, Aleksandrov, an LSR delegate from the German-occupied Ukraine, made an impassioned speech attacking the German occupation and the Ukrainian puppet régime of Hetman Skoropadskii. These anti-German sentiments were echoed by the LSR leaders Kamkov and Spiridonova; they pointedly denounced Count Mirbach, German

Ambassador in Moscow, who was present at this Congress session. Trotsky, Commissar for War, spoke in defence of the Bolshevik policy of appeasement towards Germany.

At the following session, on 6 July, came Sverdlov's sarcastic sally criticising the LSRs' contradictory policies of calling for the abolition of capital punishment whilst condoning summary executions carried out by the Vecheka. The Bolsheviks for their part, said Sverdlov, would press not for the abatement but for rapid intensification of mass terror against enemies of Soviet rule. Spiridonova countered with a long speech, blaming the Bolsheviks for introducing class conflict into the countryside by creating spurious divisions of poor peasants versus *kulaks*—the village proletariat versus village capitalism; the Bolsheviks' greatest error was their establishment, by decree, of the dictatorial food requisitioning detachments and the committees of the village poor. As for the law on capital punishment, the LSRs rejected that as an anachronistic survival of the old oppressive capitalist régime, against the restoration of which they were prepared to fight to the death; their service in Dzerzhinsky's Commission was a contribution to that fight. Nevertheless, they stood by the tactic of selective terrorism by assassination as part of their political programme, whilst repudiating the Bolshevik strategy of systematic mass terror.[1]

Meanwhile, before the Fifth Congress of Soviets assembled, the Central Committee of the LSR Party, at its meeting on 24 June under the chairmanship of Maria Spiridonova, had taken the fateful decision to force the issue with the Bolsheviks by organising a series of terroristic acts against 'the more important representatives of German imperialism', with a view to provoking a resumption of war with Germany. The signal for such action would be given in Moscow, probably through an inaugural act of terrorism. The LSRs stressed that their intention was to oppose the present policy of the Sovnarkom, and not to attack the Bolsheviks. However, realising that the Bolsheviks might retaliate aggressively, the LSRs must prepare to defend their stand by military force. In support of their intended terrorist initiative they would therefore proceed to mobilise reliable armed units.[2] This proposal to disrupt the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Germany was approved by the Third All-Russian LSR Congress which met in the first days of July, immediately preceding the Fifth Congress of Soviets.[3]

According to one of the principal actors in this drama, the Chekist and LSR Party member, Iakov Bliumkin, the LSR Party did not finally decide to assassinate the German Ambassador, Count Mir-

bach, until they realised, after the first session of the Congress of Soviets on 4 July, that the Bolsheviks would not be dissuaded from their policy of appeasing Germany. That day, before the evening session of the Congress, Bliumkin was informed by an LSR Central Committee member of the decision to kill Mirbach, to serve as a warning to world imperialism, as an appeal to the German proletariat, and as an attempt to win the Bolshevik government over to the cause of international revolution. By reason of his vantage point in the Vecheka, Bliumkin was asked to disclose all he knew about Mirbach; being in sympathy with the proposed deed, he offered to be the assassin. That same night Bliumkin attended a meeting of the LSR Central Committee, at which the assassination of Mirbach was entrusted to him and to his LSR colleague, Nikolai Andreev, who was a photographer working under Bliumkin in the Vecheka.[4]

For her part, Maria Spiridonova, in her subsequent deposition made on 10 July 1918, declared that, whilst the Third LSR Party Congress had broadly directed the Party Central Committee to disrupt the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, it was the Central Committee which chose the method, namely the assassination of Mirbach, delegating three of its members (a 'troika') to work out the operation under conditions of strict secrecy. Spiridonova claimed that, in practice, she personally directed the whole enterprise, briefing and rehearsing Bliumkin on details of the planned assassination. She indignantly rejected Bolshevik imputations that the murder of Mirbach was concerted with the Western Allies; it was entirely the product of the publicly proclaimed programme of the LSR Party.[5]

The prospective assassin, Iakov Grigorevich Bliumkin, was a colourful character who achieved a romantic, if brief, career. He was scarcely twenty at the time of the LSR Rising. Born in 1898 in Odessa, the son of a Jewish shop assistant, his sole education amounted to four years' attendance at a Yiddish-language school, after which he worked as an office errand boy. During the war he inclined to the left wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries, joining the LSR Party when this was formed after the October Revolution.[6] Prior to this, he had commanded heroic-sounding SR armed units, such as the 'Odessa Iron Volunteer Detachment'.[7] In May 1918, the LSR Central Committee nominated him for service in the Vecheka,[8] in which he was appointed chief of the new counter-espionage section within the department for combating counter-revolution,[9] headed by Latsis. In this capacity Bliumkin was responsible for effecting security penetration of the German Embassy, under the close supervision of Latsis and Dzerzhinsky.[10]

The German Embassy's awareness that it must be the target of Soviet security-intelligence operations is reflected by a diary entry, dated 29 April 1918 (just six days after the installation of the Embassy staff in Moscow), made by Baron Karl von Bothmer, a member of Mirbach's mission: 'Here we must be ever on the alert for approaches by agents and *provocateurs*. The Soviet authorities have rapidly revived the former Tsarist Okhrana (Secret Police) ... in at least equal size and in even more merciless temper, if in somewhat different form. All activity in the sphere of surveillance, espionage and terror is directed by the Central Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Espionage and Speculation—which is dreaded like the Spanish Inquisition.'[11]

This did not deter the German Embassy from approaching Dzerzhinsky for help, in mid-June, when it began receiving reports from mysterious informants—a certain Vladimir Iosifovich Ginch and a woman named Benderskaia—alleging that an assassination attempt was being prepared against members of the German Embassy, as well as a *coup* against the Soviet régime. Dzerzhinsky, who eventually interviewed Ginch in the first days of July, in the presence of a German Embassy official, formed the opinion that the allegations were undoubtedly false, their purpose being perhaps to blackmail the Germans and to lead the Vecheka astray.[12]

Meanwhile, in mid-June Bliumkin had arrested Count Robert Mirbach, an Austrian army officer taken prisoner of war, whom Bliumkin, in his subsequent deposition, erroneously described as nephew of his namesake the German Ambassador, but who was indeed distantly related to the latter.[13] Though Bliumkin had originally suspected Robert Mirbach of being a German spy, he had in fact extracted from him a signed undertaking to supply the Vecheka with secret information concerning Germany and the German Embassy.[14] On the morning of 4 July Bliumkin handed Robert Mirbach's case over to Latsis; this proved, so Bliumkin argued in his deposition, that up to that moment he had not been involved in any conspiracy to kill the Ambassador.[15]

Having received the assassination assignment late in the evening of 4 July, Bliumkin recovered Robert Mirbach's dossier from Latsis on the morning of 6 July. He prepared a document on Vecheka paper, authorising himself, Iakov Bliumkin of the Vecheka, and Nikolai Andreev—supposedly representing the Revolutionary Tribunal—to confer with the German Ambassador, Count Wilhelm Mirbach, on a matter directly concerning the Ambassador. Inscribed on the document were the forged signatures of Ksenofontov and Dzerzhin-

sky, respectively Secretary and Chairman of the Vecheka, and stamped upon it was the seal of the Vecheka, added by the Vecheka's Deputy Chairman Aleksandrovich; only at that late stage did Bliumkin initiate Aleksandrovich into the plot. Armed with this mandate,[16] Bliumkin and Andreev were driven to the German Embassy in Denezhnyi Pereulok, and gained access to the Ambassador on the pretext of discussing the case of his arrested kinsman, Robert. After a brief parley, the two Chekists killed Mirbach with a revolver and a bomb. They then fled through a window, Bliumkin breaking a leg and sustaining a bullet wound, and escaped in the waiting car to the headquarters of the Vecheka Combat Detachment in the Pokrovskii Barracks at Trekhsviatitelskii Pereulok. There Bliumkin was admitted to the Detachment's infirmary.[17] The Vecheka Combat Detachment, commanded by the LSR, Dmitrii Popov (a Vecheka Collegium member since April 1918),[18] was already completely under the control of the LSR Central Committee.

The assassination occurred on 6 July at about 3 p.m.; almost immediately afterwards Dzerzhinsky learned the news from Lenin by telephone and, accompanied by Karakhan, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, he went straight to the German Embassy where he examined the forged Vecheka order left behind by Bliumkin and Andreev. Next he proceeded to Popov's headquarters, and demanded that Bliumkin be handed over. After initial evasions by Popov, Dzerzhinsky was informed by the LSRs Proshian and Karelin that the responsibility for Mirbach's assassination lay with the LSR Central Committee, which had authorised the deed. Dzerzhinsky caught sight of a congregation of LSRs in Popov's office, among them Spiridonova, Aleksandrovich, Cherepanov, Fishman, Kamkov, and Sablin. Whilst attempting to arrest Proshian and Karelin, Dzerzhinsky was himself seized, disarmed, and detained by Popov's deputy, Protopopov. Spiridonova, who personally disarmed one of Dzerzhinsky's accompanying Chekists, Trepalov (his other two escorts were Belenkii and Khrustalev), explained to Dzerzhinsky that he and his companions were being held because they sided with Mirbach.[19] Presently Popov's men occupied the Vecheka headquarters at Bolshaia Lubianka 11, and there captured Latsis, whom Trotsky had just put in charge of the leaderless Vecheka; Latsis now joined Dzerzhinsky as a prisoner in the Pokrovskii barracks.[20]

This disastrous state of affairs was due, above all, to the LSRs' exploitation of their position in the Vecheka, from which, through inadvertence or misjudgement, neither the Sovnarkom nor Dzerzhin-

sky had thought fit to oust them after their Party's exit from coalition government. To compound this near-fatal negligence, by early July 1918 Dzerzhinsky had allowed the LSRs to fill seven places in the twenty-strong Vecheka Collegium[21] (indeed, according to Peters, *half* the Collegium consisted of LSRs),[22] entrusting to his deputy, Aleksandrovich, much of the general management of the organisation. Aleksandrovich had been responsible for forming, expanding, and equipping the Vecheka Combat Detachment, and he ensured that it was largely manned by LSRs and their sympathisers.[23] After the outbreak of hostilities with the Czechoslovak Corps in late May 1918, the Vecheka Combat Detachment, under Popov's command, had been despatched to fight the Czechs, but it soon returned to Moscow, without authorisation. In his defence Popov pleaded, with tears in his eyes, that his unit had been discriminated against at the front because it consisted of Chekists. The Vecheka Collegium thereupon permitted it to remain in Moscow. The true reason for Popov's insistence on having his troops in the capital at this juncture became clear when the Combat Detachment emerged as the focal point of the LSR insurrection.

Following Dzerzhinsky's arrest, most of the LSR leaders went to the Bolshoi Theatre, where Spiridonova intended to address the Congress of Soviets. However, the Bolsheviks succeeded in isolating all the LSRs and other non-Bolshevik delegates in the building, keeping them there overnight under guard.[24] This *coup* was effected by Peters, who was in charge of security arrangements for the Congress; the Bolshoi building was guarded by Lettish riflemen.[25] Next, still on 6 July, Peters, by a ruse, recaptured the Vecheka Lubianka HQ from Finns belonging to Popov's unit.[26]

Several prominent LSRs, such as Proshian, Cherepanov, and Sablin, aided by Aleksandrovich, continued to direct operations from the stronghold of Popov's Combat Detachment. A small unit led by Proshian occupied the Post and Telegraph Offices and sent out two telegrams addressed to all Soviets, announcing the killing of Mirbach by order of the LSR Central Committee, forbidding the transmission of messages signed by Bolshevik leaders or by 'the counter-revolutionary parties of the Right Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks', and referring to the LSRs as 'the party now in power'. One of the telegrams ended: 'Long live the revolt against imperialism! Long live the power of the Soviets!'[27] But the LSRs did not take decisive military action, and failed to consolidate their position. Their lack of purpose enabled the Bolsheviks to counter-attack.

The Latvian divisional commander, Vatsetis,[28] although not fully

trusted by the Bolsheviks, assumed command of government forces in Moscow, consisting largely of Lettish troops. Vatsetis later wrote in his memoirs: 'Besides the Lettish riflemen there were few military formations on which the Bolshevik Party could rely. Hunger made the troops' morale bad. Propaganda against the Bolsheviks had so much influence that the Russian regiments declared their neutrality. The mass of the Moscow workers maintained a neutral position too.' So precarious was the situation of the government that preparations were put in hand to evacuate the Kremlin. Lenin's first question to Vatsetis, whom he had summoned to the Kremlin at midnight, reflected the Bolshevik plight: 'Comrade, can we hold out till morning?'[29]

That the Russian troops available in Moscow were demoralised, and even disloyal, emerges from the subsequent appointment of a commission to inquire into the conduct of certain units of the Moscow garrison; the commission, functioning under the chairmanship of the Old Bolshevik and Chekist, M. S. Kedrov, purged the garrison of its unreliable elements.[30] The entire force at Vatsetis's disposal consisted (according to the official Bolshevik report on the action) of 720 infantry, 12 cannon, 4 armoured cars, 72 cavalry, and a machine gun unit of 40 men.[31] However, Vatsetis himself put the troops available to him at 1,440 men and 8 cannon.[32]

The LSRs (still according to the official Bolshevik report quoted above) disposed of up to 1,800 infantry, 6 to 8 cannon, 4 armoured cars, 80 cavalry, etc. Included in this total was Popov's Vecheka Combat Detachment which, if we accept the testimony of the LSR, Sablin, numbered only 600 to 800 men, of whom barely 200 to 300 took an active part in the fighting.[33] However, these LSR figures appear grossly inadequate if we recall that by late April 1918 the Vecheka Combat Detachment already numbered some 1,000 men. In his report to the Sovnarkom, Dzerzhinsky stated that the Combat Detachment had consisted mainly of Finns taken from service in the Red Army; however, only 200 of these remained after the majority had been despatched to fight the Czechoslovaks, whilst others had been dismissed by Popov. Dzerzhinsky himself estimated that altogether Popov's Combat Detachment numbered about 2,000 men at the time of the insurrection, after Popov and Aleksandrovich had stealthily recruited demoralised Black Sea Fleet sailors and Anarchists.[34] But not all the personnel under Popov's command supported the LSRs: Peters stressed that the men of the Sveaborg unit and Poliakov's unit had 'conducted themselves heroically'.[35]

The LSRs, though superior in numbers, could not match the

disciplined professionalism of the Lettish mercenaries; besides they had no clear-cut plan, and lacked the will to win. Steinberg summed up their predicament:

> If the fight finished with a defeat of the LSRs, it was not because their leaders were not brave enough, but because it was not at all their purpose to overthrow the government. It was a peculiar situation: both fighting parties thought that they were in the position of the defender. The LSRs defended their position after they understood that the Bolsheviks would attack them after the assassination. At the same time the Bolsheviks expected ... an attack from the LSRs. But the moment they perceived that the LSRs would not attack, they went over to the attack themselves.[36]

Vatsetis, after making a rapid reconnaissance, opened his offensive around 5 a.m., and encircled his adversary. By midday, 7 July, his artillery fire had blasted Popov's headquarters and the LSRs were routed.[37] Many were arrested,[38] including Aleksandrovich, who was seized the same day as he tried to slip out of Moscow in disguise; in a long conversation with Peters he explained that in betraying Dzerzhinsky's trust he had simply been obeying the orders of his Party's Central Committee. Peters was impressed by his obvious sincerity.[39] Aleksandrovich and twelve of the insurgents from Popov's Combat Detachment were summarily condemned to death by the Vecheka on 7 July, the sentence being confirmed by VTsIK[40] and carried out the same day, by order of Dzerzhinsky, without waiting for a judicial investigation.[41]

In actual fact the Sovnarkom was swift to appoint, on 7 July, a Special Commission of Inquiry into the LSR insurrection, consisting of P. I. Stuchka, V. E. Kingisepp, and Ia. S. Sheinkman.[42] Stuchka was preoccupied with his duties as Commissar for Justice, and, moreover, presently left for Berlin, whilst Sheinkman soon returned to Kazan where he was shot on 8 August when the Whites captured the city. Consequently, the main burden of the inquiry fell on Viktor Kingisepp,[43] an Estonian member of the investigation department of the Revolutionary Tribunal attached to VTsIK.[44] The Commission of Inquiry interviewed about 700 persons, and, having completed its work, handed the evidence over, on 10 September 1918, to the Investigation Commission (chairman E. F. Rozmirovich) of the Revolutionary Tribunal attached to VTsIK.[45]

The Revolutionary Tribunal, sitting on 27 November 1918, sentenced Popov, who had escaped, to be shot upon arrest,[46] whilst the LSRs Proshian, Kamkov, Karelin, Trutovskii, Magerovskii, Golubovskii, Cherepanov, Bliumkin, Andreev, Maiorov and Fishman were each condemned (mostly *in absentia*) to three years' imprison-

ment with hard labour. Spiridonova and Sablin, 'taking into account their exceptional pre-revolutionary services', had their sentences reduced to one year's imprisonment, and were promptly amnestied. Krylenko, in his speech for the prosecution, had demanded that Bliumkin and Andreev, who had performed the act of terrorism but had taken no part in the Rising, be punished by perpetual banishment from the Soviet Republic, and that Spiridonova and Sablin be banished for five years, with sterner sentences sought for the rest.[47]

The relative leniency of the sentences reflected Bolshevik acceptance of the LSR contention that, in assassinating Mirbach, their purpose had been not to overthrow the Bolsheviks—whose revolutionary programme they broadly supported—but solely to oppose their policies on specific issues such as Brest-Litovsk, the death penalty, and oppression of the peasants. As Steinberg put it: 'Why did the LSR Rising of July 1918 fail? It failed because there was no question of a rising against the Government. If the Party had wished to overthrow the Bolshevik Government and seize political power for itself, it would have acted differently. There is no doubt that at that time it would have had reasonable prospects of success. But the Party was not concerned at that moment with seizing the apparatus of government, it was concerned with bringing about a radical alteration of Soviet policy.'[48]

Another reason for clemency was, no doubt, that the Bolsheviks, while welcoming the opportunity to dismiss the increasingly awkward LSRs from the political scene and thus accelerate the establishment of the Communist single-party state, still did not feel strong enough to antagonise too deeply the wide following which the LSRs enjoyed in the countryside. There was a third cause for Bolshevik tolerance: by late November 1918, when sentence was passed, the Central Powers had capitulated to the Entente, and there was no longer any pressure on the Soviet Government to appease Germany over the Mirbach assassination by dealing harshly with the LSRs.

Not all LSRs followed Spiridonova's lead. G. D. Zaks, one of Dzerzhinsky's two LSR deputies in the Vecheka, had already incurred LSR Central Committee censure by voting with the Bolsheviks in favour of executions opposed by the LSRs, and was distrusted by Aleksandrovich. When the LSRs mutinied, Latsis had refrained from arresting Zaks in view of his pro-Bolshevik attitude;[49] Zaks, for his part, had loyally telephoned Trotsky to report Latsis's own arrest by the LSRs. In his speech at the Fifth Congress of Soviets on 9 July, Trotsky stated that Zaks had disapproved of the LSR Rising; the following day at the Congress Zaks publicly deplored the Rising as a

profound error.[50] Subsequently, in the context of the post-July Rising schism in the LSR ranks, Zaks became one of the founders of the Populist-Communist Party, and went on to join the Communist Party itself in November 1918.[51]

Other LSRs went over to the Communist cause, and some even joined the Cheka. The prominent LSR, Iakov Fishman, sentenced after the Rising, recanted, was pardoned, and, after working his passage by carrying out underground work against the Whites in the Ukraine, was accepted into the Cheka; in early 1921, he was assigned to the Soviet Trade Delegation in Rome as an undercover intelligence representative.[52] Similarly, Petr F. Sidorov, an LSR supporter, and a Vecheka Collegium member from 8 January to 7 July 1918, having been released from detention by decision of the Special Commission of Inquiry, joined the Bolshevik Party in December 1918, served in the Civil War as a military investigator and as chairman of the 9th Kuban Army's Revolutionary Military Tribunal, and in September 1921 was readmitted to the Vecheka, in the capacity of investigator in its Transport Department.[53]

In these circumstances, the otherwise surprising further career of Mirbach's assassin, Iakov Bliumkin, becomes more comprehensible. As related in considerable detail in Bliumkin's depositions, he succeeded in escaping from Moscow soon after the LSR *débâcle;* he lay low under aliases, writing a book on the July events, took part in LSR terrorist activity against the Skoropadskii régime in the Ukraine, co-operated with the Communists against the Petliura Directory, and even became a member of the illegal Soviet in Kiev. After the restoration of Soviet power in the area, he reported voluntarily to the Cheka in Kiev,[54] to which, on 17–19 April 1919, he made a long statement describing his role in the Mirbach murder. He explained that he had been convinced of the sincerity of the LSRs' intention to limit their action to killing Mirbach—as a protest against Communist policies and as a means of bringing about a united socialist front in the interests of world revolution; indeed he had exacted an assurance to that effect before slaying Mirbach. He regarded as deeply mistaken the subsequent LSR arrest of Dzerzhinsky, the aggressive action by Popov's Detachment and the seizure of the Telegraph Office, since such moves understandably created the false impression that the LSRs were intent on wresting power from the Communists, resulting tragically in the arraignment of the LSR Central Committee, the outlawing of the LSR Party, and persecution of its members. Bliumkin claimed that none of this would have happened if the LSR Central Committee had granted his earnest request that he should

surrender himself to Dzerzhinsky after Mirbach's assassination—a course he had again vainly urged upon a Central Committee representative in September. Now, after Germany's defeat, the Mirbach assassination was no longer a political issue, and indeed recent events in Germany and Hungary suggested the imminence of international revolution, a consummation desired by Communists and LSRs alike. In consequence, Bliumkin felt free to face the Soviet authorities.[55] In a second statement, made in Moscow on 8 May, Bliumkin, whilst affirming that he still regarded himself as an LSR, and was not in total accord with the Communist Party line, emphatically disassociated himself from his own Party's July involvement in an armed clash with the Communists.

Bliumkin's self-justifications were accepted. The special commission which considered his case proposed that he be conditionally released and subjected to political supervision; by a decision of the VTsIK Presidium, dated 16 May 1919, he was amnestied.[56] Thereafter, Bliumkin was active in the Bolshevik cause. He later recounted: 'I organised and directed clandestine groups in the rear of the White armies in the Ukraine. I was attached to the command of the guerrilla troops and carried out several confidential missions in the course of which I was more than once wounded.'[57] Still during the Civil War, Bliumkin became a member of Trotsky's military secretariat.[58] He joined the Communist Party in 1921, took part in the Communist revolution in Persia, and completed the Red Army Staff Academy in Moscow.[59] Later he organised an army for the People's Republic of Mongolia.[60]

Bliumkin wrote and spoke in public about the Mirbach assassination, boasting that he had personally shot dead the German envoy. However, according to evidence quoted by the German diplomats, Gustav Hilger and Freiherr Karl von Bothmer, who were both on Mirbach's staff in Moscow at the time, Bliumkin's three revolver shots all missed, and it was his accomplice, Nikolai Andreev, whose bullet killed Mirbach; Andreev was not available to contest Bliumkin's glory, as he had died of typhus in the Ukraine in 1919.[61]

There is one enigmatic angle to Bliumkin's involvement in the Mirbach affair: a few days before the assassination the renowned poet, Osip Mandelstam, accompanied by either Fedor Raskolnikov, Commissar for the Navy, or by the Commissar's wife, Larisa Reisner, complained personally to Dzerzhinsky about Bliumkin's scandalous conduct in boasting publicly in the Poets' Café in Moscow, that he, an important member of the Cheka, would arbitrarily order the execution of some 'wretched intellectual', a Polish or Hungarian count

and art historian (named by Dzerzhinsky as Puslovskii, a poet).[62] This account, given by Osip's wife, Nadezhda Mandelstam, is broadly in line with Dzerzhinsky's own deposition, made on 10 July 1918. Dzerzhinsky further stated that he had immediately requested Aleksandrovich to investigate the matter and to obtain the views of the LSR Central Committee; that same day the Vecheka Collegium (to whose members Dzerzhinsky did not, however, disclose the accusation against Bliumkin, pending a reply from the LSR Central Committee) apparently approved Dzerzhinsky's proposal that Bliumkin's counter-espionage section be dissolved and Bliumkin himself suspended from duty.[63] This was a curious decision: curious because Bliumkin's personal misconduct hardly justified the closure of his important section; curious, too, because the Collegium was surely entitled to know the grounds on which it was being asked to vote on an issue of this kind. The decision was rendered even more peculiar by the manifest fact that it was not acted upon, leaving Bliumkin still in his post on the fateful day, 6 July. This episode requires clarification.

At some point in the 1920s Bliumkin rejoined the Soviet political police, i.e. the OGPU, whose Foreign Department despatched him in mid-1928 to Turkey, with instructions to organise a clandestine agent network in the Near East. Returning to Moscow the following year, Bliumkin was arrested on a charge of treasonable contact with Trotsky,[64] whom he had secretly visited in his place of exile on Prinkipo Island, off Constantinople, and from whom he had carried a written message to oppositionists in Russia.[65] In late 1929, Bliumkin was shot without trial by decision of the OGPU Collegium—under pressure from Stalin.[66] Barmine comments that this was the first time that blood was spilled in the internal struggles of the Party.[67] So ended the life of Iakov Bliumkin, a fearless if somewhat vainglorious and romantically flamboyant revolutionary. His faults were largely redeemed in that, throughout his turbulent career, he followed the dictates of his political conscience, regardless of Party discipline and of personal consequences.

There is a school of thought[68] which holds that the assassination of Mirbach was, in all probability, a Communist provocation, master-minded by Lenin—or by someone in his circle—so as to discredit utterly, at one stroke, the increasingly tiresome LSRs and dispose of the inconvenient Mirbach, whom Lenin knew to be advocating, in his despatches to Berlin, Germany's abandonment of the Communists in favour of support for some more conservative Russian political grouping. According to this hypothesis, Bliumkin was in reality an undercover Communist, an *agent provocateur* whom the Vecheka,

acting on Communist Party instructions, maneouvred into killing Mirbach with the approval of the unsuspecting LSR Central Committee. Thus the murder was covertly instigated by the Communists, whilst the LSRs carried the public onus. The argument goes that this interpretation alone satisfactorily explains Bliumkin's swift rehabilitation and eventual readmission into the security organs.

To press such an argument is to overlook the fact that the LSRs' avowed purpose in assassinating Mirbach—the precipitation of hostilities between Russia and Germany—represented the contingency most dreaded by Lenin, since it threatened the Communist régime with annihilation. Hilger, a diplomat on Mirbach's staff, assessed the post-assassination situation as very critical for the Communists, and he described Lenin's strenuous efforts to avert war by appeasing the Germans.[69] Hilger's diplomatic colleague, von Bothmer, commented at the time in his diary that the assassination promoted in equal measure the interests of the LSRs and of the Entente, and imperilled the Bolsheviks, since it could well have provoked immediate severance of diplomatic relations, followed by a German military advance culminating in war or, as an alternative dire consequence, it might have brought about the outbreak of counter-revolution and the subsequent fall of the Communist régime.[70] The LSRs' objective were clearly expressed to Dzerzhinsky by two of his captors, Cherepanov and Sablin: 'You must face an accomplished fact. The Brest-Litovsk treaty is broken, war with Germany is unavoidable. We do not want power; let the situation here be as it is in the Ukraine, we shall go underground. You can retain power, but you must stop your servility to Mirbach. Let the Germans occupy Russia up to the Volga.'[71]

Lenin's alarm was dramatically conveyed in a telegram which he sent at 1 a.m. on 7 July to Stalin at Tsaritsyn: 'Today around three p.m. a Left SR killed Mirbach with a bomb. The assassination is clearly in the interests of the monarchists or of the Anglo-French capitalists. The Left SRs, refusing to hand over the murderer, arrested Dzerzhinsky and Latsis and started an insurrection against us. We are about to liquidate them mercilessly tonight and we shall tell the people the whole truth: we are a hair's breadth from war.'[72]

Mirbach's assassination was completely consistent with the LSRs' vehement opposition to the Brest-Litovsk Treaty; it was also wholly in character with the LSRs' traditional penchant for terroristic acts. The evidence published in 1920 in the *Red Book of the Vecheka*,[73] and supported by later memoirs of leading LSRs, establishes conclusively that, ten days before Bliumkin came into the act, the LSR Central Committee, inspired by Spiridonova (who had herself suffered eleven

years of penal servitude for having assassinated in 1906, then aged 21, a tyrannical provincial governor, General Luzhenovskii), deliberately decided on a course of acts of terror against leading German personalities in order to provoke the resumption of war with Germany. This policy led to the assassination not merely of Mirbach, but also, on 30 July 1918 in Kiev, of the German Commander-in-Chief in the Ukraine, General Eichhorn, at the hands of an LSR execution squad led by Boris Donskoi and Irina Kakhovskaia.[74]

Bliumkin's presentation of his own role as Mirbach's assassin is, in turn, consistent with the rest of the evidence. As for his pardon, this was in line with the ambivalent attitude at the time of the Communists towards the LSRs, some of whom the Communists still hoped to win over to their cause. As has been shown, Bliumkin was not the only LSR deeply implicated in the July Rising to be admitted later into the Cheka.

The paradox of the LSR Rising, which came so close to dislodging the Communist régime, was that it hinged on the Vecheka itself, the appointed watchdog of the Soviet state: Chekists had assassinated Mirbach; the Vecheka's Combat Detachment had constituted the base and spearhead of the insurrection; the Lubianka headquarters had been seized and Chekist leaders, Dzerzhinsky himself and Latsis, held captive. Far from functioning as the vaunted shield and sword of the Revolution, the Vecheka, cast in the role of a Trojan Horse, had all but encompassed the downfall of Lenin's precarious edifice.

In these deeply humiliating circumstances, Dzerzhinsky was released on 8 July, at his own request, from his post as Vecheka Chairman, since he was to figure as a principal witness in the inquiry now proceeding as to the causes and events of the insurrection.[75] In order to purge the Vecheka of LSR influence, the Sovnarkom dissolved its Collegium and, appointing Peters as Chairman, charged him with its reconstitution within seven days;[76] the new Collegium consisted exclusively of Communists. Although formally suspended from office, in practice Dzerzhinsky continued to direct the Vecheka, and participated in the formation of the new Collegium;[77] on 22 August 1918, he was reinstated as Chairman of the Vecheka.[78]

Meanwhile, LSRs were being systematically evicted from leading posts in local Soviets and Chekas, both at provincial and district level,[79] though the process was gradual.[80] From now on, the Vecheka would function as a Communist-run organ, untrammelled by LSR restraints. Its hands were freed at an apt juncture, as the Soviet régime entered into a period of deep crisis, towards the holocaust of the Red Terror.

Chapter V

Organisational Development, Phase II: Consolidation (July–December 1918)

There is no sphere of our life where the Cheka does not have its eagle eye.
G. Moroz in *Izvestia*, 6 November 1918

The summer and autumn of 1918 saw a buildup of economic and military pressures on the Soviet state. Internally it had to contend with hunger in the cities, with scores of peasant rebellions provoked by the extortionate grain-requisitioning campaign, and with a series of armed risings such as that of the LSRs in Moscow and the Savinkov insurrections. Externally it found itself entangled in the escalating Civil War. The Denikin advance from the Caucasus had been stemmed, but the conflict with the formidable Czechoslovak Corps had exposed the Soviet eastern flank, where a further threat was signalled by the proclamation of Admiral Kolchak as Supreme Ruler on 18 November. Meanwhile the Allied landing in Archangel on 2 August inaugurated the era of foreign intervention, accompanied by Entente blockade of Soviet territory, whilst the collapse of the Central Powers resulted in the emergence of Hetman Skoropadskii's anti-Communist government in the Ukraine, succeeded in December by Petliura's nationalist régime.

Trotsky, who in March 1918 was appointed People's Commissar for War,[1] achieved the miracle of creating an effective Red Army on the basis of conscription and by engagement of former Tsarist officers, supervised by Bolshevik political commissars. On 2 September, a supreme military command, the Revolutionary War Council *(Revvoensovet)* was set up, with Trotsky as Chairman.[2] This military system was complemented by the formation, on 30 November 1918, of the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defence (SRKO)[3] which, under Lenin's chairmanship, with Trotsky and Stalin among its members, was vested with full powers for harnessing the country's resources to the task of waging war. (In March/April 1920, the SRKO would assume the title Council of Labour and Defence

(STO);[4] both SRKO and STO will be generally referred to as Defence Council.)

VECHEKA REORGANISATION

The stringent overhaul of the Vecheka which followed upon the LSR Rising was designed to ensure that its commanding cadres stayed unquestioningly loyal to the single-party dictatorship. LSRs were of course eliminated from the Collegium, whose hard-core Communists—Dzerzhinsky, Ksenofontov, Peters, Latsis, V. V. Fomin—were presently reinforced by other dedicated Party veterans such as M. S. Kedrov, V. A. Avanesov, A. V. Eiduk, and F. D. Medved.[5] The actual framework and general principles of the security machine were left intact. The proposed expansion—both territorial and functional—of the Vecheka apparatus now went ahead rapidly, along lines envisaged by the First Conference of Chekas. No doubt the shock of the abortive LSR Rising gave this process an added impetus. The focal point for co-ordination and control in this sphere lay in the Vecheka's Territorial Liaison Department (TLD).

An impressive record of organisational achievement over the period 23 July–20 August 1918 was reported by the TLD in *Izvestia* of 28 August. Outstations now amounted to 38 Provincial Chekas (Gub-Chekas) and 75 District Chekas (Uezd-Chekas).[6] A newly formed instructional unit had despatched twenty instructors to the principal Provincial Chekas; the TLD had also delegated experienced Chekists from Vecheka HQ to conduct local operations against some of the many conspiracies and risings which proliferated at this time in widely scattered areas. Two sub-departments had been organised at headquarters under the TLD to direct the respective activities of the emergent Railway Chekas and Frontier Chekas.[7] The TLD was also responsible for distributing, to the Vecheka's various field-agencies, copies of headquarters instructions and of relevant government decrees and regulations.[8] Besides this, training courses for Cheka personnel were in progress, as advertised in *Izvestia*.[9]

However, progress in the standardisation of territorial Chekas proved slow. Dzerzhinsky felt obliged to sign, on 10 September, a regulation[10] for Provincial and District Chekas (also issued, in marginally altered form, as a statute),[11] in which he criticised the haphazard organisational structure of territorial Chekas, and reiterated the formula for Cheka departmental layout already prescribed at the June Conference of Chekas. There followed, on 2 November 1918, the statute[12] defining the status and competence of

the Vecheka, and its relations with other bodies, but this did not significantly advance the Vecheka's organisational development.

MOSCOW AND PETROGRAD CHEKAS

The Moscow and Petrograd Chekas were exceptions to the standard territorial structure: by virtue of their size and importance, these two organisations came to enjoy a special degree of autonomy. On 16 September 1918, the Party Central Committee decided that in future the Petrograd Cheka should communicate with the Vecheka at top level, through the latter's Presidium, and no longer through its TLD. At the same time the Petrograd Soviet was requested to reinforce the Petrograd Cheka's personnel,[13] which was to increase, by the end of the Civil War, to almost a thousand men, besides a Cheka battalion of seven hundred infantry and seventy cavalry.[14]

A Moscow Cheka (M-Cheka) was created by the Moscow Soviet in early March 1918, but later that month, before it had time to develop any independent activity, it was merged with the central Vecheka apparatus, following the Vecheka's transfer to Moscow. During August 1918 local Moscow Chekas, known as Area Chekas *(raionnye Ch.K)*, were formed,[15] directed by Ia. M. Iurovskii, executioner of the Imperial family. The M-Cheka was re-established as a separate entity in December 1918, by decision of the Party Central Committee taken in the autumn;[16] it was to co-ordinate the activities of the Moscow Area Chekas. The M-Cheka's first session took place on 2 December;[17] on 4 December *Pravda* and *Izvestia* announced the M-Cheka's formation by the Moscow Soviet, its collegium consisting of Dzerzhinsky as chairman, Breslav[18] as his deputy, and Iurovskii, Mantsev,[19] and Messing[20] as members. The M-Cheka's regulations were endorsed, on 26 December 1918, by the Moscow Soviet, of which the M-Cheka formally constituted a department, whilst being generally governed by Vecheka rules binding upon Provincial Chekas.

On 27 January 1919, the M-Cheka decided to wind up, by 20 February, all its Area Chekas, a move clearly dictated by the VTsIK resolution of 24 January 1919 abolishing District Chekas; however, the Moscow Area Chekas were presently replaced by area politburos *(raionnye politicheskie biuro)*, just as District Chekas were replaced by district politburos. In early March 1919, the Moscow Soviet resolved to merge the Moscow Provincial Cheka—which had been established in October 1918—with the M-Cheka, but in August 1919 it was still in existence. During the first part of 1919, 47 per cent of cases investigated by the M-Cheka were criminal ones; by autumn

1919, the M-Cheka had liquidated the most important criminal gangs.[21] The M-Cheka's record in the political subversion field was also impressive: between December 1918 and 1 November 1920 it uncovered 59 counter-revolutionary organisations, including 22 of the Whiteguard variety, 12 Right SR, 14 LSR, 3 Menshevik, and 6 Anarchist ones.[22] A particularly daunting task was the suppression of speculation, which flourished in Moscow on a monstrous scale.[23]

The establishment of a separate Moscow Cheka lessened the load of operational responsibilities weighing upon Vecheka headquarters, thereby facilitating the latter's prime duty of directing and co-ordinating the ever more extensive and complex web of Chekas throughout Soviet territory.

RAILWAY/TRANSPORT CHEKAS

One of the principal functional responsibilities which devolved by degrees upon the Vecheka was security of transport. Originally this domain had lain within the competence of the Commissariat for Communications (NKPS).[24] A Sovnarkom decree, signed by Lenin and published on 16 February 1918,[25] established the All-Russian Inter-Departmental Extraordinary Commission for the Protection of Roadways[26] (i.e. Communications), consisting of the People's Commissar for Communications, the Chairman of the Central Committee for Army Supplies, and the Deputy Chairman of the Supply Council. The Commission was instructed to safeguard the systematic provision of foodstuffs and essential materials for the population, and to suppress mercilessly speculation and illegal carriage of goods; it was afforded control over all existing organisations attending to security of communications, and was directed to arrange the speedy training and despatch of commissars and of military food-supply detachments.[27]

Evidently this measure did not sufficiently check the lawlessness and chaos prevailing on the roads and railways—at a time when the efficient functioning of transport was vital both for relief of hunger in cities and for the passage of troops—since the Sovnarkom soon found it necessary to issue a further decree, published on 26 March 1918,[28] giving the People's Commissar for Communications 'dictatorial powers in the sphere of transport', and control over the Inter-Departmental Extraordinary Commission. At his disposal was placed a Railway Military Guard,[29] to be recruited mainly from railway workers. But this improvisation proved no more effective. The First Conference of Chekas, meeting in mid-June 1918, strongly criticised the failure of this Guard to deal with black market operations on the railways, and characterised its personnel as corrupt, if not positively

subversive. The Conference recommended that the responsibility for railway security should be entrusted to 'the reliable hands of the Vecheka'.[30] In a Top Secret regulation, dated 11 June 1918, the Conference proposed that Provincial Chekas should operate Railway Chekas and Railway Commissars stationed at important communication points.[31]

Soon afterwards, on 17 July 1918, the Sovnarkom, in an effort to improve the existing machinery, produced yet another decree,[32] this time forming an Administration for the Security of Communications,[33] attached to the NKPS, in place of the All-Russian Inter-Departmental Extraordinary Commission. The strength of the Railway Military Guard was to be raised to 70,000 men, recruited solely on the recommendation of reliable organisations of the people. The writ of the new directorate was to run in all land communication networks outside military zones. A week later, a Sovnarkom decree established a Waterways Militia, subordinated to the NKVD.[34]

On 27 July, *Izvestia* carried a Sovnarkom pronouncement, signed by Lenin the previous day, and addressed 'to all railway workers', noting the difficult conditions under which the arduous task of operating rail transport was being performed, and admitting that the situation was aggravated by over-zealous and unjustified arrests of railway personnel by executive agencies such as the Vecheka. Consequently the Sovnarkom now resolved to attach to the Vecheka a special (railway) department and a Commission of Inspection consisting of representatives of *Vikzhedor* (All-Russian Railwaymen's Executive Committee) and *Vseprofzhel* (All-Russian Council of the Railwaymen's Trade Union); this Inspection Commission was entitled to participate in, and to review, all cases involving the arrest, dismissal or transfer of railwaymen. The Sovnarkom also requested the Vecheka itself to review all such cases and, whenever possible, to release railwaymen not specifically charged with anti-Soviet activities, sabotage, or speculation.[35]

On 3 August there opened in Moscow a Cheka Conference,[36] attended by 77 Provincial Cheka delegates,[37] which resolved to create a central Vecheka Railway Department, to co-ordinate the campaign against counter-revolution, sabotage, and speculation on the railways; each Provincial Cheka was to construct its own Railway Department, with subordinate Cheka Railway Sections positioned at all major railway stations, junctions, and termini, and Cheka Commissars posted at lesser stations. This done, all other organs combating counter-revolution and speculation on the railways were to be disbanded.[38] On 4 August, the Cheka Conference approved an

instruction to be issued for the guidance of Railway Chekas. This document[39] prescribed that the Vecheka Railway Department should be the apex of a system of Railway Chekas, descending through Regional (eight such Regions) and Provincial Cheka Railway Departments down to District Cheka Railway Sections and Cheka Railway Commissars. The central Vecheka Railway Department was to consist of two representatives each from the NKPS and from the Moscow Railway Cheka; it would function under the supervision of the *Vikzhedor-Vseprofzhel* Commission of Inspection. Among Railway Cheka responsibilities was passport inspection at frontier posts. Railway Chekas could form armed units for support purposes.

The new Railway Cheka system was formally established by a Sovnarkom resolution of 7 August 1918, signed by Lenin. It opened: 'In elaboration and amplification of the Sovnarkom declaration to all railway workers, published on 27 July 1918, the Sovnarkom now resolves: 1) A Special Railway Department is to be formed under the Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Sabotage and Speculation. 2) For supervision over the activities of the above, there should be created a Commission of Inspection consisting of representatives of *Vseprofzhel* and *Vikzhedor*. . . .'[40]

The precise moment of the formation of the new Vecheka Railway Department is not clear. The Vecheka TLD *communiqué* of 28 August described it as the Vecheka Railway *Sub-Department,* subordinated to the Territorial Liaison Department.[41] However, on 28 November the Second Conference of Chekas passed a resolution establishing a Vecheka *Transport* Department, divided into four sub-departments: for waterways, railways, roads, and for postal and telegraphic communications.[42] The territorial network of Transport (former Railway) Chekas and Commissars was directly controlled by this parent department at Vecheka HQ, enjoying virtual independence of the Provincial Chekas to which it was attached for administrative purposes. Where required there would now exist—at regional *(oblast)* and provincial *(gubernia)* level—Regional Transport Cheka Departments *(Okruzhnye transportnye otdely ChK)* and—at lower levels—Transport Junction Cheka Sections *(Uzlovye transportnye otdeleniia ChK)*, and below that, Transport Cheka Commissars.[43]

While the Second Conference of Chekas was sitting, the gravity of the transport crisis in the context of the Civil War was underscored by the signing, on 28 November, of a Sovnarkom decree, published two days later, proclaiming martial law on the railways, and assigning top priority to military transport requirements;[44] another statute provided for the appointment of Extraordinary Military Railway

Commissars.[45] Throughout, the Government had insisted that the various railway security agencies should not cause confusion by encroaching upon the purely technical management of the railways. The point was re-emphasised by a Defence Council resolution of 11 December 'concerning the introduction of order into railway transport'.[46]

FRONTIER CHEKAS

A functional sphere in which the Vecheka became involved early on was that of frontier control. The young Soviet state was soon faced with the problem of sealing its western border with Germany, as demarcated under the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty; for that border's protection the Supreme Military Council ordered, on 9 March 1918, the formation of a Western Screen *(Zapadnaia zavesa)* consisting of Red Army units, this force to be replaced as and when a Soviet frontier service emerged. As a start, on 30 March 1918, a Frontier Guard Chief Administration (*Glavnoe Upravlenie Pogranichnoi Okhrany*—GUPO) was established in principle under the People's Commissariat for Finance *(Narkomfin)*, its purpose being to organise and direct the proposed Frontier Guard; however, GUPO was largely staffed by politically undependable personnel taken over from the now disbanded Frontier Corps Administration of pre-October origin.[47]

On 28 May 1918, Lenin signed a Sovnarkom decree, published on 18 June, formally establishing the Frontier Guard *(Pogranichnaia Okhrana),* with responsibility for safeguarding RSFSR land and maritime frontiers against illicit passage of persons and goods. This service, directed by GUPO—attached to which was to be a Frontier Guard Council *(Sovet Pogranichnoi Okhrany)* under two commissars and a military director—came within the competence of Narkomfin.[48] Shortly afterwards, by a decree of 29 June 1918, GUPO was transferred from *Narkomfin* to the People's Commissariat for Trade and Industry *(Narkomtorg).*[49] Predictably, under these two Commissariats the Frontier Guard resembled a customs service rather than a frontier force. It functioned exclusively along the German–Soviet demarcation line.[50]

Dzerzhinsky vigilantly supervised the formation of the Frontier Guard; it was on his and on Lenin's recommendation that, on 13 July, V. D. Frolov and P. F. Fedotov, Party members both since 1912, were appointed Military Commissars to the Frontier Guard,[51] with Frolov as Commissar and Fedotov as his deputy.[52] Together with A. L. Pevnev as military director, they constituted the Frontier Guard Council which was appointed by Frontier Guard Order No. 1, of 30

July 1918.[53] These Military Commissars instituted a political purge within GUPO, 90 per cent of whose staff consisted of former Tsarist army officers serving as 'military specialists'. But when, on 6 September, G. G. Mokasei-Shibinskii was dismissed as GUPO commander, he was replaced by S. G. Shamshev, himself an ex-Imperial army colonel. For that matter, the military director, Pevnev, was a former Tsarist general, who 'served the Soviet régime faithfully'.[54]

Meanwhile the First Conference of Chekas, in its resolutions voted on 14 June, roundly condemned the inadequacy of the existing Frontier Guard apparatus, and even proposed that it should be subordinated to the Vecheka.[55] On 31 July, the Frontier Guard Commissar wrote to Dzerzhinsky, pleading that without Cheka assistance order could not be enforced in the frontier zone;[56] a conference of GUPO military commissars, held on 9 August, urged the need for provision of Cheka frontier units.

The exact chronology of the emergence of the Frontier Chekas is not clear. One Soviet historian has claimed that Frontier Chekas were first formed as early as May 1918;[57] certainly on 12 June the First Conference of Chekas formulated an Instruction for Frontier Chekas. By 1 September 1918, when representatives of 30 Frontier Chekas assembled for a Conference of Frontier Chekas held in Moscow, there already existed 34 Frontier Chekas and 60 Cheka Commissars on Russia's western frontier.[58] The conference passed a resolution recommending the conversion of all Provincial and District Chekas positioned along the German–Soviet demarcation line into Regional, Sector, and Frontier-post *(Okruzhnye, Uchastkovye, Punktovye)* Frontier Chekas, strictly subordinated to the Vecheka Frontier Sub-Department. At the same time the Frontier Chekas were also administratively integrated into the system of local Soviets, to which they reported on their activities. The Conference further instructed Frontier Chekas to co-operate fully—for the prevention of smuggling—with the Frontier Guard and the Customs Service, whose functioning the Frontier Chekas were to supervise, but without interfering in their specialist work.[59]

The Frontier Chekas' charter was detailed in the Instruction for Frontier Chekas produced by the First Conference of Chekas on 12 June 1918, and further elaborated by the Vecheka TLD in August and by the Conference of Frontier Chekas on 2 September 1918. In its final version the Instruction, graded Top Secret, spelt out the precise duties and procedures incumbent on Frontier Chekas; their broad purpose was to act in support of the Customs Service and of the

regular Frontier Guard, Cheka personnel being specifically charged with control of documents, interception of contraband, and apprehension of spies—tasks which were in line with the Vecheka's responsibility for combating speculation and counter-revolution. Categories of sensitive areas were defined, wherein foreigners were subject to special invigilation. Even the import of pigeons came under scrutiny and restriction.[60]

The September Conference of Frontier Chekas made provision for Frontier Chekas to maintain armed units, whose personnel should be allocated by the Corps of Vecheka Troops; the last named, in consultation with the Vecheka Frontier Department and with Regional Frontier Chekas, was to determine the strength of these armed units. The Frontier Chekas were also directed to operate agents for surveillance of adjoining foreign territory.[61] This transborder espionage function of the Frontier Chekas was inherited by the GPU.[62]

Although the Instruction for Frontier Chekas referred to a Vecheka Frontier Department, evidence is lacking as to when, if at all, this full department was established.[63] Initially, at any rate, the work of the Frontier Chekas and Commissars was directed and co-ordinated by a Frontier Sub-Department *(Pogranichnyi Podotdel)* under the Territorial Liaison Department at Vecheka headquarters, and by TLDs of Provincial Chekas, as prescribed in the Vecheka Instruction to Local Chekas, dated 1 December 1918. This Instruction described the hierarchy of the Cheka frontier force, ranging from the Frontierpost Cheka, through the Sector Frontier Cheka, up to the Regional Frontier Cheka, which was attached to the Regional or Provincial Cheka, of whose TLD it constituted a Sub-Department.[64]

During the summer of 1918, three Regional Frontier Chekas were established on the German–Soviet border.[65] They probably corresponded to the three Frontier Guard regions, with headquarters respectively in Petrograd (N.W. Region), Minsk (West), and Orel (South), organised by GUPO and manned by Frontier Guard detachments.[66] Until the autumn of 1918, the military protection of the German–Soviet border was provided by the Red Army's Western Screen, deployed over four sectors of the frontiers.[67]

A Sovnarkom decree of 19 August 1918 incorporated various specialist military contingents, including the Frontier Guard, within the framework of the Soviet armed forces, though still leaving them in the service of their respective People's Commissariats.[68] Thus emerged the Frontier Troops *(Pogranichnye Voiska)*, replacing the Frontier Guard and (presumably) the military Western Screen, but without

prejudice to the functioning of the Frontier Chekas. The Frontier Troops were directed by the Chief Administration of the Frontier Troops *(Glavnoe Upravlenie Pogranichnykh Voisk)* within *Narkomtorg*, and later *Narkomvneshtorg* (People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade). GUPO was dissolved on 15 September 1919.[69]

CORPS OF VECHEKA TROOPS

One of the key elements in the Vecheka that called for attention was its armed force, necessary to maintain internal order, to suppress rebellions, to uphold the authority of local Soviets, and to provide the whole Cheka system with teeth for the enforcement of government policies. The foundation for this force had been laid with the formation of the Vecheka's Combat Detachment, and of the individual Cheka contingents raised by Provincial Chekas.

It was the First Conference of Chekas which had originated the idea of organising a centrally directed body of security troops; the Conference had proposed the creation of a 'special corps for the protection of Soviet authority within the country, and of the whole railway network and territory of Soviet Russia', to be under the exclusive control of the Vecheka and of its branches.[70] Certain Chekas had already displayed local initiative in this sphere: the Riazan Cheka had raised a detachment of 500 disciplined workers for the purpose of combating counter-revolution.[71] As a Conference speaker (V. V. Fomin) put it, the regular army could not be used for such tasks, both because its effort must needs be concentrated on external defence, and because its heterogeneous composition made it unsuitable for duties such as searches and arrests, 'requiring a strong revolutionary conscience which is immune to all corrupting temptations'.[72] In a resolution—based on a report put to the Conference by I. N. Polukarov, a Vecheka Collegium member—the Conference consequently stressed that the Corps of Vecheka Troops *(Korpus Voisk VChK)* should be recruited solely from the proletariat, on recommendations from trade unions, party collectives, and factory organisations; its units were to be deployed throughout the country at important concentration points of counter-revolutionary forces, at focal railway junctions, etc. Directed by a central staff, the Corps was visualised as a unified military organism.[73]

As a first organisational step, on 13 June the Vecheka Collegium took the decision to merge all Cheka armed detachments at headquarters and in the provinces into a single Corps of Vecheka Troops.[74] The Corps was recruited from among vouched-for volunteers, aged 19 to 36, belonging to the proletariat and the poorer

peasantry. A blueprint, in the form of a Vecheka regulation signed by V. V. Fomin, head of the central TLD, was published in late September 1918 (though in essence this regulation had been approved already on 15 July).[75] Under its terms, the Vecheka was responsible for appointing the commander and subordinate commanders (the first commander and his deputy were Kamenshchikov and Polukarov, with Khrustalev as secretary), for financing the Corps and setting its personnel establishment. The Corps was to constitute a series of self-contained and mobile battalions, each numbering some 750 men and consisting of 3 infantry companies, 1 cavalry squadron, a machine gun detachment, a signals unit, and an artillery platoon.[76] According to one reputable Soviet historian's unsupported statement, by the end of July the Corps already contained 35 battalions, attached to Provincial Chekas and deployed to cover industrial nerve centres and foci of counter-revolutionary ferment.[77] It is more likely, however, that by that early date the mere foundations of most of these battalions had been laid.

In October 1918, K. M. Valobuev, an ex-Imperial army colonel, was appointed chief of staff (*i.e.* commander) of the Corps of Vecheka Troops.[78] His deputy, Polukarov, whose proposal for the formation of the Corps had been debated at the First Conference of Chekas, spoke in mid-October 1918 at the Petrograd Conference of Chekas of the Northern Commune. He emphasised the need for a centrally controlled reserve of reliable units to guard the railways. At the moment the Letts constituted the only nucleus of dependable revolutionary troops, but they could not be retained indefinitely and should be replaced by special units which were essential to such Cheka purposes as the purging of Soviet organisations of criminal elements and the suppression of banditry on a national scale; the requirement for such para-military formations had already been approved in Moscow. Despite some opposition, Polukarov's resolution was carried; the Petrograd Conference voted that every Provincial Cheka should have a battalion of troops at its exclusive disposal, these battalions forming part of the Corps of Vecheka Troops; all existing armed units attached to Provincial Chekas should be merged in these battalions.[79]

The independence of the Vecheka's troops was curtailed by certain provisions in the VTsIK Decree on the All-Russian and Local Extraordinary Commissions, published on 2 November 1918, which ruled that armed units of the central and local Chekas should stand under the supervision, and on the establishment, of the supreme military authority, the *Revvoensovet*. Executive committees of local

Soviets were given responsibility for financing and determining the size of locally attached Cheka armed units.[80] However, the Second Conference of Chekas in its resolutions dated 28 November 1918, whilst ordering strict observance of the VTsIK decree's provisions, nevertheless centralised the command of all Cheka armed units in the Staff of Vecheka Troops at Vecheka HQ, in line with previous policy.[81] Moreover, Dzerzhinsky strictly forbade the utilisation of any part of the Vecheka Corps by any department whatsoever without the assent of the parental Cheka concerned and of the Corps Staff.[82] However, one-third of the Vecheka Troops (10,000 out of a total of 30,000 men in mid-March 1919)[83] had to serve at the front. In February 1919, two Vecheka regiments were despatched to the western front, to reinforce the hard-pressed Soviet Latvian army.[84]

The Vecheka Troops were initially recruited on a volunteer basis. They included many idealistic international Communists. For instance, a Cheka battalion which fought against Kolchak in Siberia was composed entirely of internationalists: Hungarians, Germans, Ukrainians from Galicia, and Poles,[85] presumably all ex-prisoners of war. Vecheka Troops underwent an extensive baptism of fire before the end of 1918; in November and December alone, Cheka detachments figured in the suppression of forty-four insurrections, whilst sixteen Cheka detachments were assigned to the Red Army for service at the front.[86]

FRONT CHEKAS AND CHEKA SPECIAL DEPARTMENTS

Separate from the development of the Vecheka's own support troops was the history of the Army and Front Chekas, and of the Cheka Special Departments *(Osobye Otdely*—hereafter referred to as OOs in order to distinguish them from other special departments in the Vecheka) which served the armed forces. The first step was taken by the Sovnarkom in its resolution of 16 July 1918, instructing Latsis to organise an Extraordinary Commission for the purpose of combating counter-revolution in the rear of the Red Army engaged in fighting against the Czechoslovak Corps on the eastern front; all local Chekas in this front zone were placed under Latsis's command.[87] Another such Front Zone Cheka operated on the western front. As fronts ceased to exist, so did these Front Zone Chekas, and their function of clearing the area of counter-revolutionary elements reverted to the Provincial Chekas.[88] The Vecheka now produced a special instruction for the formation of a whole system of Chekas attached to all military fronts and armies.[89] However, the simultaneous functioning, in the same area, of a Provincial Cheka with all its District Chekas, and one

or even two Army Chekas, the whole lot supposedly operating under the authority of a Front Zone Cheka, understandably made for conflict and confusion—as was indeed reported by a female representative of the Vecheka TLD after her visit in September 1918 to Latsis's Front Zone Cheka, stationed in Kazan.[90]

On 29 July 1918, a Military Sub-Department *(voennyi podotdel)*, subordinated to the Department for Combating Counter-Revolution, was established at Vecheka headquarters for the purpose of directing the activity of Front and Army Chekas.[91] This was raised to the dignity of a full department by decision of the Second Conference of Chekas in late November 1918;[92] the Conference reiterated the Vecheka's resolve to organise Chekas attached to all armies and fronts, with the right to post Cheka Commissars to lesser army formations. These military Chekas, which no longer imposed their authority upon Provincial Chekas (the remaining old-type Front Zone Chekas being now dissolved by order of the Conference) were subordinated both to the Vecheka and to the military command[93]—a dual allegiance productive of strife.

Friction and duplication of effort also resulted from the parallel operation, on the one hand, of these Front and Army Chekas, responsible for combating counter-revolution in the armed forces, and, on the other hand, of the Military Control agency *(Voennyi Kontrol,* known as *Voenkontrol)* —represented on military fronts and at points of strategic importance—which had been entrusted in May 1918 with the function of military counter-espionage.[94] In building a conscript army on a basis of discipline and professionalism, Trotsky had chosen to rely on a central core of ex-Tsarist officers who were prepared to accept the Bolshevik régime; in the Red Army they were closely supervised by political commissars. During 1918, the Bolsheviks succeeded in attracting over 22,000 of these so-called 'military specialists' to serve in the Red Army;[95] in 1919, they constituted four-fifths of Red Army commanders, and they continued to outnumber commanders of proletarian origin throughout the Civil War.[96] Between 12 June 1918 and 15 August 1920, 48,409 former officers were taken into the Red Army.[97] Trotsky had no illusions about the dubious loyalty of these class enemies, but he badly needed their military expertise; apart from the system of political supervision, he also used their families as hostages for their good behaviour. In his order of 30 September 1918, Trotsky threatened potential deserters among these officers:

> Let them know that they are at the same time betraying members of their own families: fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, wives and children. Staffs of the armies of the Republic, and regional commissars, are ordered to report by telegraph to Aralov of the *Revvoensovet* the names of all deserting officers with all necessary details concerning their families. Aralov, in co-operation with the proper institutions, will take the necessary measures to arrest the families of deserters and traitors.[98]

The 'proper institutions', i.e. the Cheka organs, took merciless punitive and deterrent action. For instance, according to Red Cross workers in Kiev, a group of women, whose officer husbands had joined the Red Army and then deserted to the Whites, were put to death in their husbands' stead.[99] The Vecheka Military Department's Registration Bureau registered all ex-Tsarist officers.[100]

The *Voenkontrol* service, which was responsible for guarding the Red Army against espionage, was itself largely recruited from *ancien régime* military specialists, all potentially hostile to the Communist cause; there were many cases of treachery among *Voenkontrol* staff on the eastern and southern fronts,[101] as for instance in Vologda, where twenty of them were executed by the Vecheka.[102] Lenin called a committee of inquiry, under Dzerzhinsky, to review the *Voenkontrol* system. On 19 December, the Party Central Committee accepted the Dzerzhinsky committee's proposals, which had been worked out under *Revvoensovet* auspices and which recommended the merging of Front and Army Chekas with *Voenkontrol* posts so as to form Vecheka Special Departments (OOs); meanwhile *Voenkontrol* should be headed by Kedrov, subject to *Revvoensovet* consent.[103] Kedrov's appointment went through. M. S. Kedrov had joined the Vecheka and taken charge of its Military Sub-Department (promoted to full Department by December) shortly after his return, in September, from the Archangel front.[104] Thus *Voenkontrol* was now subordinated to a senior Chekist who also headed the Vecheka's Military Department and its network of Front and Army Chekas. On 27 December, the Vecheka instructed all Provincial Chekas to organise, without delay, their own Military Departments (promptly renamed Special Departments) for the local extirpation of counter-revolution, espionage, and misuse of authority within the Red Army; these Special Departments were to work in close co-operation with the Party organisations of military institutions and locally stationed military units.[105] And, on 1 January 1919, a joint resolution of the Vecheka and *Revvoensovet* directed that, in place of the Vecheka Military Department and of *Voenkontrol*, there should be established a single Special Department (OO), organisationally integrated in the

Vecheka but also carrying out *Revvoensovet* assignments.[106] Under the terms of VTsIK resolution of 6 February 1919,[107] published as a statute on 21 February,[108] a system of Special Departments (OOs) came to replace and combine the existing Cheka and *Voenkontrol* security organs serving with the Red Army and Navy.[109] Kedrov, now elevated to the status of Vecheka Collegium member, headed the Special Department of the Vecheka to which these OOs were organisationally subordinated, whilst they also stood operationally at the disposal of the *Revvoensovet* and of its lower echelons.[110]

Thus by 1 January 1919, in the space of one year since its birth, the Vecheka had burgeoned into a mighty machine of state, answerable in practice only to the Sovnarkom (though still ostensibly under NKIu and NKVD supervision), deployed throughout all the provinces and districts of Soviet-held territory, represented functionally by substantial networks of Transport and Frontier Chekas and, very soon, by the system of Special Departments (OOs) in the armed forces, and disposing moreover of its own armed force in the shape of the Corps of Vecheka Troops.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Most of the Vecheka's guiding principles were by now elaborated in a series of detailed instructions, such as the Instruction to Local Extraordinary Commissions, basically formulated by the Second Conference of Chekas (held in Moscow during 25–28 November, 1918)[111] and issued by the Vecheka in revised form on 1 December 1918.[112] This document, which superseded the Vecheka regulations of 11 and 13 June 1918, laid down that collegia of Provincial and District Chekas should consist of 5 members, and 3 to 5 members, respectively, the chairmen and deputy chairmen of such Chekas being appointed by the executive committees of local Soviets, and confirmed in office by the Vecheka; the Chekas should appoint their own departmental heads and secretaries. Hierarchical discipline was to be assured by affording senior Cheka organs the right to rescind or amend the decisions of junior bodies, and to depute representatives with a deciding vote to attend deliberations of the latter; the Vecheka was to be the supreme authority. Provincial Cheka budgets, which covered the budgets of District Chekas and local Railway and Frontier Chekas, were, after preliminary approval by executive committees of local Soviets, to be integrated into the general budget and overall personnel establishment of the Vecheka.

The structure of Provincial Chekas was remodelled under this Instruction, dividing into four main elements:

(a) Territorial Liaison Department *(Inogorodnii Otdel)*, headed by the Provincial Cheka chairman or his deputy, with responsibility for guidance and supervision of the Provincial Cheka's subordinate agencies, inclusive of Frontier Chekas.
(b) Secret-Operational Department *(Sekretno-Operativnyi Otdel)*, combining the functions of the former departments for combating counter-revolution, speculation, and misuse of authority.
(c) Legal Department *(Iuridicheskii Otdel)*, responsible for directing the work of Cheka investigators and for presentation of completed cases to the Cheka collegium for final decision.
(d) Transport Department *(Transportnyi Otdel)*, headed by the Provincial Cheka's deputy chairman.

The Instruction of 1 December also spelt out the relationship between local Chekas and Soviets, defined the respective spheres of competence of Chekas and Revolutionary Tribunals, and determined the personnel quotas of Provincial Chekas and their subordinate units.[113]

ESTIMATE OF VECHEKA STRENGTH AS AT 1 JANUARY 1919

It is difficult to compute the Vecheka's manpower strength at this or indeed at any subsequent juncture, since reliable and comprehensive statistics have not been published, and data produced by Chekists for public consumption cannot be accepted at face value. Peters, for instance, stated that during 1918 Vecheka personnel did not exceed 500,[114] but clearly this figure is ludicrously inadequate, since we have it from a Vecheka documentary source that by 10 June the Vecheka headquarters staff alone totalled 1,000.[115] Quoted below are the personnel establishments laid down by Vecheka Instruction of 1 December 1918 for Provincial and District Chekas, and for ancillary Transport and Frontier Chekas. These figures provide only approximate guidance, since establishments may not have been recruited to full strength, and since the precise number of territorial and functional Chekas is not known. The establishments can be summarised as follows:

Provincial Cheka personnel		
General Office	23	
Commandant's Department	16	
Legal Department	12	
Secret (*i.e.* Secret-Operational) Department	26	
Territorial Liaison Department	20	
Total	97	(say 100)

District Cheka personnel	24
Regional/Provincial Cheka Transport Department	30
District Cheka Railway Section	20
Sector/District Frontier Cheka	13
Frontier Post Cheka	9

However speculative the exercise, an estimate of Vecheka personnel strength as at 1 January 1919 might be essayed along the following lines:

Estimated Strength		*Authorised Establishment*
Vecheka Headquarters	1,300[116]	
Moscow Cheka	300	
Petrograd Cheka	400	
40 Provincial Chekas[117]	3,000	4,000 (40×100)
365 District Chekas[118]	6,000	8,760 (365×24)
34 Frontier Chekas and 60 Commissars[119]	1,000	1,000 (34×12+60×9)
Transport Chekas	3,000	6,200 (40×30+250×20)
Army and Front Chekas	2,000	
Corps of Vecheka Troops	20,000[120]	30,000 (40×750)
Total	37,000	

The above rough-and-ready computation is decidedly on the conservative side, putting personnel strengths well below the authorised establishment in several instances and not allowing for a Corps of Vecheka Troops central reserve.

HEADQUARTERS ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Whilst the preceding pages have offered fairly detailed information on the evolution, during the second half of 1918, of the organisational structure of Provincial and District Chekas, no comparable evidence has been adduced in respect of Vecheka headquarters. If, however, we assume that the ascertained Provincial Cheka pattern was a reasonably accurate reflection of the Vecheka parental image, then we would expect to find, by the end of 1918, the following functional division at Lubianka HQ in Moscow:

(1) Secret-Operational Department (being a combination of the previous departments for combating counter-revolution, speculation, and misuse of authority)
(2) Territorial Liaison Department (control of local and Frontier Chekas)
(3) Transport Department
(4) Special Department (OO)

(5) Legal Department
(6) Administrative Department
(7) Komendatura (guarding of Vecheka HQ establishments and prisons, etc.)

Of the above, we already know that Numbers 2, 3, and 4, were established at Vecheka HQ by 1 January 1919, and we also know that the remaining departments/elements had come into existence at Provincial Cheka level by that date.

Chapter VI

The Red Terror Erupts

La vie humaine est peu de chose en Russie.

Marquis de Custine, *La Russie en 1839,*
Vol. III, Paris, 1843, p. 81

'Terror was forced upon us by the terrorism of the Entente, when the hordes of the Great Powers of the world fell upon us, stopping at nothing'[1]—asserted Lenin in justification of the Bolshevik resort to terror. In point of fact, foreign intervention only opened, still somewhat tentatively, with the occupation of Archangel by Anglo-American troops on 2 August 1918, a Japanese landing in Vladivostok on 3 August, and the Dunsterforce's advance on Baku on 4 August. The earlier British encroachment in Murmansk had been limited to safeguarding Allied military stores, whilst the fateful Soviet conflict with the Czechoslovak Corps—and the consequent stepping up of Civil War—had been directly provoked by Trotsky's decision, taken in mid-May, to disarm the Czechs, whose Soviet-authorised evacuation was then proceeding in orderly fashion. As one perceptive historian of Allied intervention has concluded: whatever other criticisms Allied intervention may be open to, the charge that it inspired the terror, even indirectly, is not valid—terror was implicit in Bolshevism from the start.[2] That is not to deny that intervention may well have been responsible for exacerbating and prolonging the terror, by stoking the Civil War and investing it with the aura of 'capitalist encirclement'.

The Red Terror undoubtedly sprang from Lenin's doctrine of terror, preached and practised since October as an integral part of his unrelenting pursuit of power; the terror's singular ferocity can be ascribed to two factors: first, the element of violence inherent in the history of Russia and, second, the savagery peculiar to civil war, where brother rends brother with bestial brutality. *Homo homini lupus.*

The spontaneous, if sporadic, eruption of violence in the wake of the two revolutions of 1917, deliberately encouraged after October by Lenin's incitements to terror, had, until March 1918, been restrained by the LSR endeavour to impose the rule of law—even if this was

only the relative justice of the Revolutionary Tribunal. But after LSR withdrawal from coalition government, with the surge of Civil War, and the rash of peasant risings provoked by Lenin's food requisitioning policy, the Bolsheviks increasingly turned to terror as a sovereign remedy. The LSR Rising and the Savinkov revolts of July prompted the intensification of terror, though not yet on a country-wide scale. The multiplying Chekas now began to play their part in the general scheme of repression. As from the end of July 1918, *Izvestia* carried, almost daily, bulletins on the activities of the Chekas in the provinces, recording fines, arrests, and executions inflicted in the suppression of 'counter-revolutionary' manifestations.[3] Subversive stirrings had become endemic in the countryside, where the peasantry fought, with sullen fury, to defend their stocks of grain against the raiding food-confiscation detachments of city workers: NKVD archives recorded 26 such revolts in July 1918, 47 in August, and 35 in September—revolts suppressed with extreme ferocity on both sides.[4] A particularly sanguinary rising took place in Livny, in late August, during which the *kulaks*, led by SRs, reportedly massacred the poorer peasants and seized the town, killing officials of the local Soviet and the Cheka chairman.[5]

Lenin's role in personally supervising the suppression of such insurrections is illustrated by the series of telegrams despatched to the provinces, calling for merciless reprisals. The following Lenin signals are typical: telegram of 9 August 1918 to the chairman of Nizhnii Novgorod provincial Soviet executive committee *(gubispolkom):*

> Clearly a Whiteguardist rising is brewing in Nizhnii. You must exert every effort, form a *troika* of dictators (you, Markin and another), *instantly* introduce mass terror, *shoot and transport* hundreds of prostitutes who get the soldiers drunk, ex-officers, etc. Not a minute to be wasted. ... Peters, Chairman of the Extraordinary Commission,[6] says that on their side, too, there are *reliable* personnel in Nizhnii. You must act at full stretch: mass searches. Executions for possession of weapons. Mass deportations of Mensheviks and unreliable elements.[7]

Telegram of 9 August 1918 to Penza *gubispolkom*: 'Your telegram received. Essential to organise a strengthened guard of reliable persons to carry out merciless mass terror against the *kulaks*, priests and White Guards; unreliable elements to be locked up in a concentration camp outside the town. Get the [punitive] expedition under way. Wire results. Chairman of Sovnarkom, Lenin.'[8] The context of this telegram was (in the Soviet version) that a *kulak* revolt had flared up on 5 August in the Penza district, in the course of

which the *kulaks* received support from many middle-stratum and even poor peasants; the revolt was suppressed on 8 August.[9]

No quarter was given in the seething Civil War. Latsis, head of the Cheka on the eastern front, declared in an *Izvestia* article of 23 August 1918, captioned 'There are no written laws of civil war':

> In almost all epochs, among almost all peoples, established customs assumed the form of written laws. Capitalist war has its written laws, formulated in various concepts. ... But in civil war ... you will look ludicrous if you apply or demand the observance of such customs and laws. ... This is the law of civil war—slaughter all those wounded fighting against you. And so it is. That is the practice. It is essential not merely to destroy the active forces of the enemy, but also to demonstrate that anyone raising the sword against the existing order will perish by the sword. That is the meaning of civil war which is well observed by the bourgeoisie. ... We have not learned these rules. Our people are shot in hundreds and thousands; we execute singly and after long deliberations in commissions and tribunals. In civil war there are no courts of law for the enemy. It is a life and death struggle. If you do not kill, you will be killed. Therefore kill, that you may not be killed.[10]

But the Bolsheviks had learned the 'unwritten laws' of civil war well enough, even during this preliminary period of 'unofficial' Red Terror, as they proved by the savage retribution meted out in Iaroslavl. The Savinkov insurrection in Iaroslavl occurred on 6 July, coinciding fortuitously with the LSR Rising in Moscow; Savinkov-inspired revolts followed immediately in Murom and Rybinsk, where they were swiftly extinguished. Iaroslavl, however, was not retaken by the Bolsheviks until 21 July; the Bolshevik forces included Cheka detachments sent from Petrograd and Rybinsk.[11] The future Soviet statesman and Politburo member, N. A. Bulganin, headed the Cheka detachment from Nizhnii Novgorod, and played an important part in the reprisals that followed.[12] Fifty-seven of the captured insurgents, mostly officers, were shot on the spot. Thereafter a special commission of investigation (in which Vecheka Collegium member, D. G. Evseev, and a group of Chekists sent by the Vecheka, participated)[13] selected a further 350 captive insurgents, and had them executed.[14] This slaughter, committed *before* the start of Allied intervention and *before* the 'official' Red Terror began, was publicised in the Soviet press, presumably *pour encourager les autres*.

Nevertheless, so far the Vecheka had been remarkably restrained. In its press *communiqué* covering the activities of territorial Chekas over the period 23 July–20 August 1918, the Vecheka claimed, almost certainly mendaciously, that only 43 executions had been carried out by Provincial Chekas, and only 4 by District Chekas during those four weeks.[15] Even so, the Vecheka was increasingly caught up in the

crescendo of violence. Dzerzhinsky, in one of his rare letters to his wife in Switzerland, wrote on 29 August: 'Here there is a dance of life and death—a moment of truly bloody battle, of titanic effort.'[16]

The 'official' reign of terror, in which the Vecheka was to perform a central role, was triggered off by the assassination of Uritskii in Petrograd and by the attempt on Lenin's life in Moscow, both events occurring on 30 August 1918. Since the move of the Soviet Government to Moscow in mid-March 1918, Moisei Solomonovich Uritskii had been second only to Zinoviev in the Bolshevik hierarchy of power in Petrograd. On 12 March, a general assembly of the Petrograd Soviet appointed a Council of People's Commissars of the newly formed Northern Workers' Commune, embracing Petrograd and its territories. In this Council Uritskii was Commissar for Internal Affairs, also exercising responsibility for External Affairs, besides heading the Petrograd Cheka—more precisely styled 'The Extraordinary Commission of the Northern Region Commune for combating counter-revolution and speculation'.[17] In this last capacity, Uritskii had earned himself a reputation for cruelty which was not altogether deserved. Despite Lenin's urgings to Zinoviev to exact vengeance for the killing of Volodarskii, Uritskii had remained strenuously opposed to executions, not, as he explained to one of his carnage-bent Cheka Presidium colleagues, through soft-heartedness, but on grounds of expediency, since executions generated hatred and were thus counter-productive.[18] However, on 18 August 1918 the Council of Commissars of the Soviet of Communes of the Northern Region published a resolution declaring that those guilty of counter-revolutionary activities were liable to instant execution, any such executions being carried out solely by decision of the Cheka.[19] The discovery of a conspiracy hatched by officers of the Mikhailovskii Artillery Academy caused the issue of terror tactics to be debated by the Petrograd Cheka Collegium. Prior to the Collegium meeting, Uritskii engineered the passing of a resolution by the Petrograd Cheka Presidium, enabling a single veto to nullify a Collegium majority decision favouring a sentence of death. The Collegium then voted unanimously for the execution of the Artillery Academy officer conspirators, with one abstention—that of Uritskii, who, whilst arguing strongly against the motion, respected the consensus of opinion sufficiently not to intervene with a veto. Several days later the twenty-one condemned men were executed, the sentence appearing in the press over Uritskii's signature.[20]

Among those executed was Vladimir Borisovich Pereltsveig, whose close friend, Leonid Akimovich Kanegisser, vowed revenge. At 11.15

a.m. on 30 August, as Uritskii entered the hall of the Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Northern Regional Commune (the former Tsarist Ministry of Foreign Affairs building on Dvortsovyi Square), he was fatally wounded by Kanegisser, and died shortly afterwards. The assassin fled on a bicycle but was pursued and, after an exchange of shots, was cornered and caught on the premises of the Petrograd English Club at 17 Millionnaia Street. The twenty-two-year-old Kanegisser, a polytechnic student and an ex-cadet of the Mikhailovskii Artillery Academy, was an aspiring poet of Jewish origins and bourgeois background. He had belonged to the Populist-Socialist Party since 1915. Under interrogation he asserted that he had acted entirely on his own initiative. However, because of his associations with Right SRs and with the Mikhailovskii Academy, Kanegisser's deed was publicly ascribed to an SR/Whiteguardist plot.[21]

Having heard of Uritskii's assassination, Lenin instructed Dzerzhinsky to conduct an immediate investigation in Petrograd, but on arrival there Dzerzhinsky learned of the attempt on Lenin's life and hurried back to Moscow.[22] This was not the first such attempt. On 1 January 1918, shots had been fired at Lenin's car as he left a meeting in Petrograd, wounding his fellow passenger, the Swiss socialist, Fritz Platten, who had initiated the Swiss-German negotiations for Lenin's return to Russia. That attack had been the occasion of a *Pravda* article, threatening the recalcitrant bourgeoisie: 'Let them remember: for every one of our heads they will answer with a hundred of theirs. ... If they endeavour to destroy the people's leaders, they themselves will be mercilessly destroyed. All workers, all soldiers, all conscientious peasants will then say: long live the red terror against the hirelings of the bourgeoisie.'[23]

On the late afternoon of 30 August, Lenin addressed a public meeting at the Mikhelson factory in Moscow. His speech ended with the words: 'With us there is only one way: victory or death!'[24] As he was leaving, at 7.30 p.m., he was severely wounded by revolver shots fired by a young woman. She was arrested, brought to the Vecheka, and there questioned in the course of two or three days and nights by Peters[25] and others. Her first interrogator was M. Iu. Kozlovskii, in his capacity as member of the NKIu Collegium;[26] Kurskii, the Commissar for Justice, and N. A. Skrypnik, at that time head of the Vecheka Department for Combating Counter-Revolution, also took part in her interrogation.[27] She eventually testified that she was Fania (Fanny) Kaplan, aged 28, came of a Jewish family in the Volynskaia Province, and had changed her name from Roidman to Kaplan in

1906—in which year she had been sentenced to perpetual penal servitude by a court-martial in Kiev for participation in an Anarchist terrorist act. In prison she had met Maria Spiridonova and had been converted to the Socialist Revolutionary creed; at the present time she leaned towards the Right SRs and supported the idea of reconvening the Constituent Assembly, but she would not admit to having any current party political affiliation. She had shot at Lenin entirely on her own initiative, because she considered that he had betrayed the Revolution and that his continued existence undermined faith in socialism and would delay its realisation for decades.[28]

The further fate of Fanny or Dora (as Socialist Revolutionary writers habitually referred to her)[29] Kaplan has been vividly described by Pavel Malkov, then Commandant of the Kremlin. Acting on orders from V. A. Avanesov, member and secretary of the VTsIK Presidium (and by then presumably also a member of the Vecheka Collegium), Malkov shortly afterwards transferred Kaplan from the Lubianka to the Kremlin, where she was guarded by Lettish soldiers. A day or two later, Avanesov showed Malkov the written verdict of the Vecheka: Kaplan was to be shot under Malkov's supervision. Avanesov directed that the sentence should be carried out that very day, and Sverdlov ordered that Kaplan's body be destroyed without leaving a trace. Despite his reluctance to kill a woman, Malkov took Kaplan into a Kremlin courtyard and himself shot her there at 4 p.m. on 3 September 1918.[30] The next day *Izvestia* carried a short notice: 'Yesterday, by decision of the Vecheka, the execution took place of the Right SR, Fanny Roid-Kaplan, who shot at comrade Lenin.'[31]

Maria Spiridonova took an interest in Kaplan's fate, since she had shared imprisonment with her; the two women figure in a group photograph of inmates of the Malzev penal prison in 1910.[32] In her open letter written from prison in November 1918 to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Maria Spiridonova reproached Lenin for not having spared Dora Kaplan's life.[33] According to Angelica Balabanoff, soon to become Secretary of the Comintern, who visited the wounded Lenin, Nadezhda Krupskaia wept bitterly at the thought that, in the person of Dora Kaplan, a revolutionary had been condemned to death by a revolutionary government; Lenin himself seemed deeply affected by her execution.[34] No credence can be given to Trotsky's assertion: 'We didn't even execute the terrorist, the Social Revolutionary terrorist, who put two bullets in Lenin's body, or those who killed Uritskii and Volodarskii.'[35] The execution by the Petrograd Cheka of Uritskii's assassin, Kanegisser, was reported by *Izvestia* on 23 October 1918.

Although the terrorist acts against Uritskii and Lenin were committed on the same day, there was no connection between them: Uritskii's assassin was a Populist Socialist,[36] whilst Kaplan was a Right SR sympathiser, with LSR connections and an Anarchist background. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government regarded, or pretended to regard, the two acts as the concerted parts of a conspiracy of terror against the Communist régime. Unfounded charges of responsibility for these and other terrorist acts would later be brought against Right SR leaders at their Moscow trial in June-July 1922.

There were immediate calls for reprisals. By the evening of 30 August, VTsIK had issued a proclamation to all Soviets, blaming the assassination bids on the Right SRs—'hirelings of the British and French'—and declaring that the working class would respond to such acts by merciless mass terror.[37] On 2 September, VTsIK adopted a resolution couched in similar terms;[38] a state of martial law was imposed throughout the country.

Meanwhile the Communist press was clamouring for blood. The organ of the Red Army, *Krasnaia gazeta*, demanded: 'Without mercy, without sparing, we will kill our enemies in scores of hundreds. Let them be thousands, let them drown themselves in their own blood. For the blood of Lenin and Uritskii ... let there be floods of blood of the bourgeois—more blood, as much as possible.'[39]

On 3 September, *Izvestia* published a Vecheka proclamation of 31 August, signed by Peters as Deputy Chairman, calling upon the working class to 'crush the hydra of counter-revolution' by applying mass terror:

> Let the enemies of the working class remember that anyone arrested when carrying arms without the necessary permits and identity papers will be subject to instant execution; anyone who dares to agitate against Soviet authority will be arrested immediately and confined in a concentration camp. The representatives of the bourgeoisie must come to feel the heavy hand of the working class. All representatives of plundering capital, all marauders and speculators will be set to forced public labour and their properties will be confiscated; persons involved in counter-revolutionary plots will be destroyed and crushed by the heavy hammer of the revolutionary proletariat.[40]

The same issue of *Izvestia* printed a telegram from Stalin, calling for 'open, mass, systematic terror against the bourgeoisie and its agents'. And on 4 September, *Izvestia* gave the text of a telegraphic instruction from Petrovskii, People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, addressed to all Soviets, complaining that, despite the assassinations of Soviet leaders, the mass shootings of comrades in Finland, in the

Ukraine, and in the Don Cossack country, in spite of the continuing spate of conspiracies unearthed in the rear of the Red Army, and the 'open admission by Right SRs and other counter-revolutionary scum of complicity in these conspiracies', there were in practice remarkably few serious repressions and mass shootings of White Guards and of the bourgeoisie, which showed that notwithstanding the constant talk of mass terror, such terror did not really exist. Petrovskii's telegram went on:

> There must be a decisive end to such a situation. There must be an end to such slackness and sentimentality. All Right SRs known to the local Soviets must be arrested immediately. Considerable numbers of hostages must be taken from among the bourgeoisie and officers. Mass shootings must be applied unreservedly upon the least attempt at resistance, or at the least stir among the White Guards. Local provincial executive committees must display special initiative in this respect. Departments of administration, acting through the Militia and the Extraordinary Commissions, must take measures to detect and arrest all persons hiding under assumed names, and to shoot uncompromisingly all who are involved in White Guard activity. All the indicated measures must be carried out immediately. The heads of departments of administration must immediately inform the Commissariat of Internal Affairs concerning any indecisiveness in this respect on the part of any local Soviets. ... Not the slightest wavering, not the least indecision in the application of mass terror.

This telegram served as the official signal for the systematic implementation of terror on a country-wide scale. The NKVD's admission regarding the low incidence of terror to date, as well as the régime's strenuous measures to intensify the terror by means of central government edicts, administrative instructions, and through the virulent press campaign inciting to violence against the SRs and the bourgeoisie, all combine to refute Peters's disingenuous assertion that the Red Terror was the spontaneous expression of deep indignation on the part, not of the Soviet leadership, but of the broad working masses. 'This mass indignation', Peters insisted, 'had an effect upon the Cheka's organs, upon the Soviet executive committees, and the whole local administrative apparatus, and so the Red Terror began without directives from the centre, without any orders from Moscow.' Peters further claimed that the Red Terror did not strike its victims haphazardly; those shot were arrant White Guards and Tsarist executioners already detained in prison.[41] In point of fact, the crescendo of exhortations from Moscow culminated in the Sovnarkom's formal enactment, on 5 September, of the Decree on the Red Terror, signed by the People's Commissars for Justice and Internal Affairs, Kurskii and Petrovskii. It read:

The Council of People's Commissars, having heard the report of the Chairman of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Speculation and Misconduct in Office concerning the activity of the Commission, finds that in the given situation it is absolutely essential to safeguard the rear by means of terror; that in order to increase the activity of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, and to instill into it a more systematic approach, it is necessary to reinforce it with as many responsible Party comrades as possible; that it is essential to protect the Soviet Republic against its class enemies by isolating these in concentration camps; that all persons involved in White Guard organisations, plots and insurrections are to be shot; and that it is necessary to publish the names of all those shot, giving the grounds for their execution.[42]

This was, for the Vecheka, an open licence to kill. In Latsis's words: 'That, against which many Party comrades had protested so strongly—the right to execute—was now legalised. To the White Terror life forced the reply of the Red Terror.'[43] Latsis had in mind, of course, not the death penalty under the law (that had been restored on 16 June 1918, but hardly affected the Vecheka, since it concerned purely judicial processes, which lay outside the Vecheka's competence), but summary justice.

The Vecheka had long before assumed the right to dispense summary justice by virtue of Lenin's 'Socialist Fatherland in Danger' proclamation of 21 February 1918; however, owing to LSR opposition within the Vecheka Collegium, the application of that measure had perforce been limited to criminal cases. After the LSR Rising, the Vecheka immediately extended its exercise of summary justice to include political adversaries of the Communist régime: the Vecheka's first recorded 'political' victims were the thirteen captured LSR insurgents, themselves Chekists, executed on 7 July 1918. Thereafter, during July and August, the Chekas—still without a clear mandate to effect executions—had participated in the sanguinary suppression of politically inspired insurrections, such as those instigated by Savinkov. Now, under the terms of the NKVD circular telegram and of the Sovnarkom decree, the Chekas were publicly directed to put into practice the government's policy of unrelenting mass terror, with discretion to execute virtually at will.

To strengthen the Chekas' hand, on 17 September Dzerzhinsky issued a Vecheka instruction authorising the Chekas to 'liquidate' (i.e. to dispose of, by execution if necessary) on their own, all cases of counter-revolution investigated by them; certain exceptions to this rule were the subject of special instructions. On the other hand, in order to lighten their burden, the Chekas should tackle only the more substantial cases of misconduct in office, such as constituted a threat

to the state; all lesser cases in this category should be handed over to Revolutionary Tribunals or to the People's Courts, whilst cases involving profiteering offences should all be passed on to People's Courts.[44]

In Petrograd, the first mass killings had preceded the decree on the Red Terror. On 3 September, *Izvestia* announced that over 500 hostages had been shot by the Petrograd Cheka.[45] The officially admitted figure for executions effected by the Petrograd Cheka over the first six weeks of the Red Terror was 800,[46] but this did not take into account such executions as the reported shooting of 400 prisoners during a single night in the island fortress of Kronstadt.[47] As at November 1918, public opinion in Petrograd put the total of executions in that city and region at 1,300,[48] very probably an under-estimate.

Elena Dmitrievna Stasova, secretary of the Petrograd Bureau of the Communist Party's Central Committee, and a full member of the Central Committee itself since March 1918, claimed to have averted an even worse bloodbath; on 30 August, immediately after Uritskii's assassination, she attended a meeting of the Petrograd Party Committee at which Zinoviev urged that the workers should be given *carte blanche* to settle scores with the intelligentsia after their own fashion, out on the streets—an open invitation to lynch law. Zinoviev clearly had in mind Lenin's written exhortation to the Petrograd Party Committee, after the assassination of Volodarskii, not to 'obstruct the *absolutely* correct initiative of the masses' for avenging Volodarskii's death by mass terror, and indeed to encourage it.[49] Zinoviev's proposal was dropped following Stasova's protest that such a panic reaction would provoke dire repercussions, That same day Stasova was herself appointed to the Petrograd Cheka's Presidium as representative of the Petrograd Party Committee, continuing in that part-time post until her transfer to Moscow on 12 March 1919.[50] Another formidable woman sitting on the Petrograd Cheka's Presidium was Varvara Nikolaevna Iakovleva, a Vecheka Collegium member since July 1918, who reportedly headed the Petrograd Cheka from September 1918 until her recall to Moscow in January 1919.[51] Iakovleva and Stasova were said to be jointly directing the terror in Petrograd in the last months of 1918.[52] However, G. I. Bokii was the Petrograd Cheka's Chairman at the start of September, signing as such a list of 122 prominent hostages published in the Petrograd *Pravda* of 6 September 1918, threatening their execution if a single Soviet official were killed.[53]

According to *Izvestia*, 29 counter-revolutionaries were executed in

Moscow on 5 September, among them being the former Minister of the Interior, Khvostov, his deputy, Beletskii, and the ex-Minister of Justice, Shcheglovitov;[54] however, another account stated that on that same day over 80 persons (including those named above) were taken from Moscow prisons and publicly executed in Petrovskii Park.[55] The *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin* of 27 October, for its part, named 90 persons shot by order of the Vecheka, including the Tsarist officials mentioned above, but omitted the date of their execution.[56] This short-lived Cheka periodical, published from 22 September to 27 October 1918, provided a representative picture of the casualties inflicted by the Red Terror; in its columns the regional, provincial, and district Chekas announced on all sides the mass arrests and the executions of hostages which were a daily occurrence during this period. Here we find the Nizhnii Novgorod Regional Cheka, exceptionally quick off the mark, reporting already on 31 August the execution of 41 persons 'from the bourgeois camp';[57] a leading light in this Cheka, since its inception, was its deputy chairman, N. A. Bulganin, who organised the Red Terror locally.[58] The Ural Regional Cheka, evacuated from Ekaterinburg (where it had slain the Tsar and his family) to Viatka, reported the arrest of 23 ex-policemen, 154 counter-revolutionaries implicated in conspiracy or agitation, 8 monarchists, 28 Kadet Party members, 10 Mensheviks and Right SRs, 186 officers, and 32 counter-revolutionaries 'who had penetrated Soviet organs'; 35 prominent counter-revolutionaries had been shot.[59] The Ivanovo-Voznesensk Provincial Cheka had detained as hostages 181 prominent bourgeois and some leading 'socialist-traitors'; a number of executions had taken place, and one of the District Chekas had constructed a concentration camp for 1,000 detainees. The Sebezhsk Cheka shot 16 *kulaks,* and also a priest for 'holding a service for Nikolai Romanov'; the Vologda Cheka accounted for 14 officers, speculators, etc.; the Astrakhan Cheka killed 4 LSRs and 5 White Guards; the Orel Cheka—20 White Guards; the Kursk Cheka—9 persons, including an ex-member of the Duma; and so on, an endless procession of often anonymous obituaries.[60] The minutes of a single meeting of the Western Region Cheka, held on 17 September, recorded the verdicts reached in 54 cases, involving 80 persons in all; among the 34 individuals condemned to death were former army officers, ex-police officials, criminals, landowners, doctors, and priests.[61]

The above catalogue constitutes a selection of reports published in the *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin* during its brief existence. Over the months of the Red Terror, other Cheka publications, and the

metropolitan and provincial press of Soviet Russia, featured frequent *communiqués* reflecting the vast flow of arrests and executions, it being declared policy at this time to advertise, for deterrent effect, the scope of terror reprisals. Thus the *News of the Tsaritsyn Provincial Cheka* reported the execution of 103 persons during September-October 1918,[62] whilst the *Izvestias* of Moscow and Petrograd carried their share of these grim necrologies, copied from the local press, as for instance the following particularly chilling example contributed by the Penza Provincial Cheka: 'For the murder, in an ambush, of comrade Egorov, a Petrograd worker, the Whites have paid with 152 lives. Firmer measures will be taken in future against the Whites.'[63]

Such unbridled and disproportionate retaliation was, in part, the desperate reaction of an isolated and minority-based régime striking out wildly against a ring of enemies. In part, also, it stemmed logically from Lenin's doctrine of class conflict, which postulated the dictatorship of the proletariat imposing its will on the bourgeoisie by a reign of fear. The Cheka, having been assigned the responsibility of implementing the Party's draconic policy of the Red Terror, dutifully performed as the obedient instrument of the Party's will. A leading Chekist, G. S. Moroz, presented an exemplary Leninist, clinically detached, interpretation of the Vecheka's role:

> The Extraordinary Commission emerged, not from the imaginings of idle Bolsheviks, but as a consequence of the class war. In so far as the latter gives birth to the dictatorship of a class under conditions of an organised state, so is it inevitable that this class should subjugate and oppress its enemies. So it was, so it is, so it will be. Under conditions of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the revolutionary class—the proletariat—is subjected to oppression and subjugation, whilst in the reverse situation, i.e. under the dictatorship of the latter, similar oppression becomes inescapable for the counter-revolutionary class—the bourgeoisie. Once this is so, then the necessity becomes clear for the existence of organs which can carry out this part of the work of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Chekas are precisely such organs, and their absence in conditions of a sharp, most cruel civil war, merely manifests the weakness of the position of the proletariat.[64]

The wholesale, indiscriminate character of Chekist reprisals reflected the violent incitements of government decrees and Party press. Inaugurating the Red Terror, the Party's organ, *Pravda*, had declared: 'Workers, the time has come when either you must destroy the bourgeoisie, or it will destroy you. Prepare for a mass merciless onslaught upon the enemies of the revolution. The towns must be cleansed of this bourgeois putrefaction. All the bourgeois gentlemen must be registered, as has happened with the officer gentlemen, and all who are dangerous to the cause of revolution must be exter-

minated. ... Henceforth the hymn of the working class will be a hymn of hatred and revenge.'[65]

Zinoviev, Lenin's lieutenant in Petrograd, in a speech made in mid-September, seemed to be advocating genocide: 'To overcome our enemies we must have our own socialist militarism. We must carry along with us 90 million out of the 100 million of Soviet Russia's population. As for the rest, we have nothing to say to them. They must be annihilated.'[66]

Over the years Lenin had himself advocated the systematic application of mass terror, and had even privately approved the notion (ironically suggested by Steinberg) of 'social extermination'.[67] It is not surprising, therefore, that Chekists should take Lenin's doctrine of class conflict to the extreme conclusion of proposing the physical extermination of hostile classes, if the latter resisted the dictatorship of the proletariat. The classic statement of this fanatical attitude was formulated by Latsis, Chairman of the Eastern Front Cheka, writing in November 1918 in that Cheka's periodical, *Krasnyi Terror (Red Terror)*: 'We are not waging war against individual persons. We are exterminating the bourgeoisie as a class. During the investigation, do not look for evidence that the accused acted in deed or word against Soviet power. The first questions that you ought to put are: To what class does he belong? What is his origin? What is his education or profession? And it is these questions that ought to determine the fate of the accused. In this lies the significance and essence of the Red Terror.'[68]

That Dzerzhinsky shared Latsis's views on the elimination of class enemies emerges from his description (in the course of a press interview in Kharkov in early May 1920) of the Red Terror as being characterised by the basic features of 'terrorisation, arrests and the extermination of enemies of the revolution on the basis of their class affiliation or of their pre-revolutionary roles'.[69] It was not congenital cruelty that drove idealistic Communists like Latsis and Dzerzhinsky to speak and act in such terms. It was, rather, a single-minded dedication to Lenin's doctrine of a merciless class war, in which the victory of the oppressed proletariat justified any and every means necessary for its attainment.

Lenin, whilst quick to rouse and exploit class conflict, remained a cool pragmatist, averse to wholly alienating the non-proletarian classes, among which were to be found indispensable allies, such as Trotsky's 'military specialists'. For that matter, the Bolshevik leadership itself was almost entirely non-proletarian in origin. Consequently, Lenin took Latsis sharply to task in his article 'A small

picture to explain big questions', written in late 1918 or early 1919, but not published in Lenin's lifetime. In this article Lenin emphasised that Communism could be constructed only out of materials created by capitalism; hence members of the bourgeois establishment, whilst deserving of distrust and denial of political responsibility, should nevertheless be harnessed to the work of socialist construction. Lenin praised comrade Latsis personally as 'one of the best and most experienced Communists', but poured scorn on his call for total destruction of the bourgeoisie.[70]

Nevertheless, Latsis's drastic criteria passed into Chekist practice: a top secret 'instruction for the legal department'—evidently of the Ukrainian Cheka (of which Latsis was Chairman in 1919)—specified: 'We do not require evidence of guilt against an exploiter of other men's labour, or a counter-revolutionary; it is sufficient to determine his social standing or his political physiognomy, in order to apply administrative measures to him, as to a class enemy of the proletariat and of communism.'[71]

The Kharkov Cheka is known to have acted on this basis; investigators interrogated according to Latsis's precept, being solely concerned to elicit their client's full name, age, social and economic standing, and political affiliation.[72] A precise instance of Chekist application of this class principle in establishing a prisoner's guilt is quoted by the Anarchist, Alexander Berkman. In 1920, Burov, Chairman of the Nikolaev Cheka, demanded the death sentence for a young man who had been denounced by his jealous mistress as a counter-revolutionary. 'But the man may be innocent', protested Berkman. 'How can you speak so, tovarishtch?' replied Burov. 'You talk of evidence! Why, the uncle of this fellow was a rank bourzhooi, a big banker. He escaped with the Whites, and his whole family are counter-revolutionists. The best thing to do with such fellows is to execute them.'[73]

No statistics are available for the number of executions effected during this first phase of the 'official' Red Terror, a period perhaps definable as the last four months of 1918. At all events the Petrograd Cheka's frank admission of 800 executions (a gross underestimate) in its region alone, and that merely over six weeks, categorically disproves Peters's claim that the total of executions during the Red Terror throughout Soviet Russia did not exceed 600.[74] Even less credibly, Peters, in a newspaper interview at the height of the carnage, dismissed the terror as being simply a 'terror of hysteria': 'All that has happened is that a few over-excitable revolutionaries lost their heads, and showed too much zeal. As regards Petrograd, no

shootings at all took place before Uritskii's murder, [*sic*!] though there have been many since, and sometimes the shooting was indiscriminate; and as regards Moscow, its only response to the attempt upon Lenin has been the execution of a few ex-monarchical Ministers.'[75]

If by mid-October the number of Red Terror casualties demonstrably ran into several thousand, on the sole evidence of *The Vecheka Weekly Bulletin* and of a sample of the Soviet press, then the total number of executions over the last four months of 1918 must have been correspondingly much higher. It was in mid-October 1918 that Zinoviev, when addressing the Conference of Chekas of the Northern Commune in Petrograd, said of the Red Terror: 'It is a radical remedy which we have applied correctly, but that is not the end of it; in this matter we are entering upon the most critical phase. There cannot be any relaxation of "pressure".'[76]

The first public protest against the outbreak of the Red Terror was made in a note, dated 5 September, addressed by the diplomatic corps in Petrograd to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. The note expressed the deep indignation of various foreign governments at the reign of terror introduced in Petrograd, Moscow, and other cities.[77] This merely drew a long and impassioned harangue from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, denouncing the iniquities of the imperialist powers and of the Russian *ancien régime*; he provocatively ended his tirade: 'And we are certain that the popular masses of all countries, oppressed and terrorised by tiny groups of exploiters, comprehend that in Russia violence is only practised in the holy interests of liberating the mass of the people, and that not only do they understand us, but they will follow in our footsteps.'[78]

Inevitably the excesses of the Red Terror provoked a strong reaction from within Russia; the wave of protest against the Vecheka assumed varying forms and came from several quarters. Firstly, there was the continuing campaign, waged since mid-1918, to secure the subordination of Provincial and District Chekas to the Soviets to which they were attached; this battle was fought by the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) which, being responsible for co-ordination of administrative organs of local government, deeply resented the local Chekas' claim to independence. This inter-departmental conflict, in which the NKVD scored a seeming success with the abolition of the District Chekas in late January 1919, was to terminate in final victory for the Vecheka upon the appointment, in mid-March 1919, of Dzerzhinsky as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, in addition to holding office as Chairman of the Vecheka.

A second, parallel struggle developed between the Vecheka and the People's Commissariat for Justice; the latter strongly disputed the Vecheka's right to dispense summary justice and so bypass the Revolutionary Tribunals. Kurskii, People's Commissar for Justice, and Krylenko, Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Tribunal, were the Vecheka's determined adversaries, and pressed VTsIK to restrict the Vecheka's powers of detention and punishment; eventually, under VTsIK resolution of 17 February 1919, the function of passing sentence was limited to the reorganised Revolutionary Tribunals, though the Vecheka still exercised the prerogative of meting out summary justice in areas under martial law, and of consigning people to concentration camps.

A third issue was raised by the Vecheka's wholesale imprisonment of members of the bourgeoisie and of the professional classes as hostages, including many 'specialists' who were indispensable to the efficient functioning of the economy and of the administration of government. On this battleground the Vecheka was faced by irate People's Commissariats demanding the release of key personnel, against most of whom no specific charge had been brought.

These three conflicts between the Vecheka and departments of state will be traced in greater detail in the next chapter. Here we shall dwell upon the opening phase of the Vecheka's fourth conflict, a war waged upon it by influential Party critics. Many idealistic Communists were roused to vehement moral indignation by the cruel and arbitrary character of the Red Terror, and by the spectacle of its wanton application by Chekists, quite a number of whom were criminals and sadists. A ground swell of criticism of the Vecheka manifested itself at Party meetings and in the official Communist press, to the point of demanding that the extra-judicial authority of the Vecheka be quashed and replaced by proper process of law in open court.[79] The fact that such bitter hostility to, and even persecution of, the Vecheka stemmed from the Party itself, rendered this the most testing period in the Vecheka's history, complained the Chekist, Moroz,[80]—a time when, as Latsis put it, 'the majority of Party members had ill-conceived notions about the Vecheka, and some of them even campaigned against us'.[81]

One of the more insistent critics of the Vecheka was the veteran Bolshevik journalist and member of *Pravda's* editorial staff, M. S. Olminskii.[82] Writing in *Pravda* on 8 October, he referred to the numerous arrests and executions carried out by Chekas throughout Soviet territory, and he accused Cheka personnel of lacking the restraint essential in their responsible calling. He quoted passages

from *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin* No. 2, which suggested that the Vecheka was setting itself above Party and Soviets.

Peters had already complained in *Izvestia* of 22 September about the campaign of calumny directed against the reputation of the Vecheka, whose leading personnel were accused of bribery, false testimony, and other misdeeds; now, in an *Izvestia* interview published on 17 October, Peters declared that the Chekas were being given a bad name by criminals posing as Chekists, as had been the case with two bandits recently executed in Riazan. He conceded that criminals were occasionally found serving in the Chekas, but this was a temporary phenomenon inevitable in a period of moral and economic crisis; taking into consideration the wide extent of Cheka activity, such rare cases of abuse were mere trivialities. Peters declared: 'All this noise and lamentation about the energetic and firm measures taken by the Chekas does not deserve the attention it receives.' In a further long article in *Izvestia* a week later, Peters was at pains to identify the Extraordinary Commissions with the Party: 'The Vecheka and Chekas should be organs of the merciless dictatorship of the proletariat, of the dictatorship of the Russian Communist Party. If there are malpractices, this means that the Chekas are functioning badly, that their organisation is weak and lacks the required resources. They must be reinforced from the centre, and do not let people like Olminskii wail that we demand the best personnel for the Chekas. Issues of life and death for Soviet power are being decided at this moment.'[83]

In yet another interview, published in *Izvestia* on 29 October, Peters, questioned about the crimes of several Chekists whose cases had been submitted to the Revolutionary Tribunal, pointed out that the Vecheka punished very severely any of its personnel detected in illegal acts; many had deservedly been shot.[84] Unfortunately, black-mailers posing as Chekists extorted money under false pretences from families of arrested persons; 'the very name of the Extraordinary Commission' said Peters 'is so terrible to the bourgeoisie that they forget to ask these scoundrels for their warrants'. After complaining about the false rumours and exaggerations concerning misdeeds committed by Chekists, Peters admitted: 'Nevertheless, we do not wish to conceal that we have had abuses, though not as significant and numerous as rumour would have it.' Peters was against relaxation of terror: 'I am not a partisan of bloody terror except when it is absolutely indispensable, but I firmly and definitely maintain the necessity of systematic, planned and uninterrupted warfare against

the bourgeoisie with a view to disarming it, rendering it impotent, and converting it into a working community.'[85]

Lenin, who had been the prime advocate of terror even before the attempt on his life, remained consistent in his attitude thereafter. Within ten days of being wounded, he signalled to Trotsky: 'Thank you; convalescence is going splendidly. I am confident that the suppression of the Kazan Czechs and White Guards, and likewise of the bloodsucking *kulaks* who support them, will be a model of mercilessness.'[86] Lenin firmly supported the Chekas in their time of trial. Addressing a Chekist gathering on the first anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, he spoke words of consolation and encouragement:

> It is not at all surprising that we hear the activities of the Chekas attacked not only by enemies but frequently also by friends. It was a hard task that we took upon ourselves. When we assumed government of the country, we naturally came to commit many mistakes, and of course the mistakes of the Extraordinary Commissions attract the most attention. The narrow-minded intelligentsia picks on these mistakes, not wanting to delve deeper into the essence of the matter. What does surprise me about these wails concerning the Chekas' mistakes is the inability to put the problem in a wider perspective. They pick upon individual mistakes of the Chekas, they sob and fuss over them. ... When I contemplate the activity of the Chekas and set it against the criticisms, I remark: these are petty trivialities, of no importance. ... What is important for us is that the Chekas are implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in this respect their role is invaluable. There is no other way to liberate the masses except by crushing the exploiters by violence. That is the occupation of the Chekas, and therein consists their service to the proletariat.[87]

Returning to the attack in *Pravda* of 25 December 1918, Olminskii reported on the fear that haunted the population of villages and remote towns cowed by the violent and licentious conduct of Soviet and even Party officials. He singled out for mention the Cheka of the little town of Kakarev: 'The Extraordinary Commission tries to free itself of all controls. There have been executions in the prison courtyards. In the sight of prisoners. A former policeman—now a Communist—works in the capacity of special investigator.' In some localities the wanton application of terror by the Chekas provoked disciplinary action: in Nizhnii Novgorod, for example, the Cheka chief, Iakov Vorobev, and his assistants, including N. A. Bulganin, were forced to resign in January 1919, though they were presently reinstated by order of the Party Central Committee.[88] The Chekist, Moroz, wrote in *Pravda* that during 1918 'the Chekas came to be regarded as something superfluous and even harmful to our

Revolution. Matters went so far that Chekists were called "inquisitors" and "okhranniki". The Chekas themselves were called "torture chambers", "Bastilles", etc.'[89]

Dzerzhinsky complained unavailingly, on 19 December, to the Party Central Committee about the malicious press campaign mounted against the Vecheka. The Central Committee merely passed a pious resolution to the effect that the Party and Soviet press ought not to print this type of evil criticism of Soviet institutions, as had happened to the Vecheka, 'whose work is conducted in particularly difficult conditions'.[90] But the press attacks continued unabated. Krylenko, when subsequently criticising the unrestricted powers wielded by the Chekas, commented: 'The second half of 1918 was a period when the Red Terror was at its height, and it is therefore completely understandable that, given these exceptional powers, the work of these commissions [the Chekas] should have brought about a series of excesses and abnormalities which in turn could not but provoke justifiable reaction.'[91]

Chapter VII

State within State: Vecheka versus NKVD and Judiciary

> While the state exists there is no freedom. When freedom exists, there will be no state. Lenin(5), Vol. XXXIII, p. 95
> *(The State and Revolution)*

The Vecheka's running battle with Party critics centred on the moral dilemma of ends and means, an issue resolved by Lenin's affirmation of the principle of expediency. By contrast, the Vecheka's conflict with the state administration and judiciary, which likewise reached a climax at the height of the Red Terror, took the form of an inter-departmental contest, in which the Vecheka's rivals—the Commissariats for Internal Affairs (NKVD) and Justice (NKIu)—disputed not so much the Vecheka's methods as its encroachments upon their own legitimate functions. This institutional clash resulted from the anomalous character of the Vecheka—a temporary, extra-legal agency with ill-defined, largely arbitrary powers, unintegrated into the machinery of state and answerable solely to the Sovnarkom.

Conceived as a provisional expedient, the Vecheka had been improvised in response to a practical emergency. However, as security problems grew, so did the size and scope of the Vecheka expand. Although devised primarily as an investigative organ, equipped with a few minor administrative sanctions, the Vecheka had swiftly acquired powers of arrest, search, detention, and presently, summary justice. Meanwhile, its charter, initially embracing counter-revolutionary activities and bureaucratic sabotage, had broadened to include profiteering and misuse of authority—infringements of the law normally falling within ordinary police competence. Moreover, by the spring of 1918 the Vecheka was busily suppressing banditry in Moscow. Duplication of effort and confusion ensued, especially in the provinces where Chekas inevitably collided with the apparatus of local government operated by the Soviets under NKVD supervision.

THE MILITIA

The Vecheka's usurpation of conventional police powers was facilitated by the absence of a reliable police force. Although Rykov,

the first Commissar for Internal Affairs, had, in a decree passed on 28 October 1917,[1] called upon all Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (but not, at this stage, of the distrusted peasantry) to organise Workers' Militias, the implementation of this brief and imprecise decree was neither prompt nor uniform, largely for lack of any settled policy concerning the very nature of the proposed Workers' Militia. The initial plan, based on Lenin's theoretical, post-February 1917 pronouncements, envisaged the replacement of the regular but decentralised People's Militia, created by the Provisional Government in place of the Tsarist police, by a new Workers' Militia performing obligatory part-time duties; a recommendation to that effect was circulated by the NKVD to all Soviets in early January 1918.[2] However, this concept proved unrealistic in practice, and local Soviets came to rely instead on remnants of the old Militia, on Red Guards, on the army, investigation commissions, etc. Pragmatism prevailed over doctrine, and presently the NKVD concluded that, for the urgent task of enforcing revolutionary law and order, a professional, full-time, paid Militia was temporarily indispensable. A proposal in that sense, first circulated to Soviets by the NKVD in late April 1918,[3] was approved by the NKVD Collegium on 5 June 1918 in the form of a draft decree,[4] and was thereafter put into practice, even though this measure never received the Sovnarkom's formal assent.[5]

Eventually, in mid-October 1918, the matter was regularised by the issue of an NKVD and NKIu instruction, published as a statutory resolution entitled 'Concerning the organisation of a Soviet Workers' and Peasants' Militia'. The Militia was therein defined as a local executive organ directly subordinated to Soviets at provincial, district, and city level. The local Militia administration *(upravlenie)* constituted a sub-department *(podotdel)* of the department of administration *(otdel upravleniia)* in every provincial Soviet executive committee. Central control of the Worker-Peasant Militia was exercised by an Administration of Militia (promptly designated Chief Administration of Militia: *Glavnoe upravlenie militsii*—abbreviated to GUM) functioning as a sub-department of the Department for Local Administration *(otdel mestnogo upravleniia)* at NKVD headquarters. Militiamen were uniformed and armed; eligible for service were literate RSFSR citizens over twenty-one and entitled to vote in elections for Soviets. The Militia was described as 'guarding the interests of the working class and poorer peasantry'. Among its duties were enforcement of laws and decrees, maintenance of public order, seeing to the safety of public highways and bridges, issue of

identity cards and employment documents, investigation of crime, besides routine police functions in support of the judiciary, such as execution of searches and arrests, effectuation of sentences, etc.[6] On 5 October 1918, the criminal investigation service, which had been attached to the NKIu since February 1918, was transferred to the NKVD.[7]

CONFLICT WITH NKVD REGARDING SUBORDINATION OF LOCAL CHEKAS

Meanwhile, the system of territorial Chekas had also been evolving. As already noted, the First All-Russian Conference of Chekas, convened in mid-June 1918, was attended by representatives of forty-three Provincial and District Chekas, each one raised by a local Soviet to which it was in principle attached. The Vecheka, in its conference resolutions, accepted that every regional, provincial, or district Soviet was responsible for appointing the collegium members and chairman of its particular Cheka; the Vecheka further ruled that these territorial Chekas should report on their activities to the respective Soviets, and should co-operate closely with all local Soviet institutions. But at the same time the Vecheka was determined to impose its own absolute control upon all territorial Chekas, stipulating that each such Cheka should be strictly and exclusively subordinated to its next superior Cheka, thus establishing an unbroken chain of command ascending from the juniormost Cheka commissar in the field to the pinnacle of the Vecheka itself—whose Chairman was appointed by the Sovnarkom. Through its Territorial Liaison Department, the Vecheka directed its local Chekas, sending them instructions for immediate unquestioning fulfilment.[8]

The ambiguity of this double subordination of local Chekas—both to the Vecheka and to the Soviets—was compounded by paragraphs 7 and 8 of a Top Secret regulation adopted by the June Conference, authorising Chekas 'to take appropriate measures' in the event of abuse or dereliction of duty occurring in local Soviet organisations, whilst similarly authorising Soviets 'to take appropriate measures'—inclusive of arrest and prosecution—against erring Cheka personnel.[9] This dichotomy of authority provoked farcical conflicts, such as the mutual arrests of chairmen of the local Cheka and Soviet in Staritsa District; a similar *imbroglio* in the adjacent Torzhok District was only prevented because the local Cheka, although very fierce, had a healthy respect for the head of the Soviet executive committee.[10] Local Chekas also clashed with other government departments: without prior warning the Kursk Cheka arrested a key member of the

Kursk military commissariat, thereby disrupting mobilisation throughout the province.[11] Moreover, duplication of responsibility was inherent in the Vecheka's definition of the Provincial Cheka as an organ of administrative power, responsible for ensuring public order and for enforcing all government ordinances,[12] thus paralleling similar functions discharged by the Militia.

The First All-Russian Congress of Chairmen of Provincial Soviets and Heads of Provincial Departments of Administration, opening in Moscow on 30 July 1918, laid down that the executive committee of every provincial and district Soviet should consist of thirteen specific departments, each representing the interests of a particular People's Commissariat or other state agency. The thirteenth department, that of administration, which represented the NKVD itself, should subdivide into four sub-departments, dealing respectively with (a) general matters, (b) information and instruction, (c) Militia, (d) Chekas. The Congress passed a resolution declaring that the functioning of Chekas in isolation, outside the unified apparatus of local government, had led to constant conflict; it was absolutely essential that all Provincial and District Chekas be incorporated, as sub-departments, in the departments of administration of local Soviets.[13]

Friction between Chekas and Soviets was exacerbated by an article in *Izvestia* of 28 August 1918, in which the Vecheka's Territorial Liaison Department, emphasising the Chekist principle of 'strict centralisation and unconditional subordination of lower to higher organs', asserted that local Chekas should in no case be attached to any particular department of a Soviet (a clear reference to department No. 13, specified above), but only to the Soviet as a whole.[14] The Vecheka followed this up on 29 August with a categorical instruction, signed by Dzerzhinsky and copied to Soviets for their information, commenting on the mass of incoming reports concerning friction between various local organs, such as Soviets, and local Chekas. Whilst lecturing the latter on the need to maintain the closest contact with local Soviet organs, Dzerzhinsky wished it to be made clear to such Soviet organs 'that the Chekas are indisputably autonomous as regards their work, and must carry out implicitly all instructions issuing from the Vecheka, as being the highest organ to which they are subordinate. The Chekas are merely accountable to the Soviets, but neither the Soviets nor any of their departments may under any circumstances countermand or suspend the Vecheka's instructions.'[15] This almost tongue-in-cheek pronouncement by the

Vecheka Chairman constituted a forthright declaration of the territorial Chekas' independence of local government control.

These conflicting directives and polemics were temporarily halted by the Soviet Government's publicly proclaimed policy of Red Terror, whereby the Vecheka and its agencies were authorised to carry out unrestricted arrests and executions of political suspects and hostages. True, Petrovskii's NKVD circular of 4 September to all Soviets urged 'departments of administration, acting through the Militia and the Extraordinary Commissions', to shoot unreservedly all persons involved in White Guard activity,[16] thus preserving the fiction of Cheka subordination to Soviet departments of administration. On the other hand, the text of the Sovnarkom decree of 5 September on the Red Terror, signed by Petrovskii for the NKVD and Kurskii for the NKIu, made no mention whatever of their two Commissariats, stressing instead the prominent role of the Vecheka in implementing the Terror.[17]

In the Vecheka regulation concerning the structure of Provincial and District Chekas, published as a statute on 14 September 1918 (this being the first statute concerned exclusively with the Vecheka), Dzerzhinsky significantly made no reference at all to local Soviets. Instead, he directed that territorial Chekas should derive support from local Party Committees, and should request the latter to appoint supervisory collegia *(kontrolnye kollegii)* consisting of two Party representatives and one from the Cheka.[18] Provision for such local Party-Cheka supervisory collegia had already been made in the resolution concerning territorial Chekas, passed on 11 June 1918 by the First Conference of Chekas (initially, up to 6 July 1918, the local supervisory collegia consisted of one Cheka representative and one each from the Communist and LSR parties),[19] which resolution had also established a central Vecheka Supervisory Collegium-cum-Inspection Unit *(kontrolnaia kollegiia i inspektorskaia chast)* for checking on the activities of territorial Chekas.[20] This Vecheka supervisory agency may well have been identical with, or have developed into, the Supervision and Inspection Collegium *(kontrolno-revizionnaia kollegiia)* which, according to *Izvestia* of 29 September, the Vecheka had found it necessary to form in order to combat 'theft, bribery and blackmail perpetrated by government employees, or by persons masquerading as such'; the public was invited to direct complaints to this office at Bolshaia Lubianka 14.[21] This *Izvestia* announcement, following swiftly upon Peters's complaint in *Izvestia* about the campaign of calumny aimed at the Vecheka,[22] was

doubtless prompted by the insistent press criticism of Chekist malpractices.

The conflict between Chekas and Soviets was resumed with Vecheka Order No. 47 of 26 September, signed by Peters and entitled 'On the mutual relationship between Chekas and Soviet organs & departments of administration'.[23] This unilateral statement of the position was published, in a slightly different form, in *Izvestia* of 3 October; it is such an uncompromising and explicit pronouncement on the Vecheka's relations with the NKVD and NKIu, and indeed with the Sovnarkom and VTsIK, that it deserves quotation in full (in the *Izvestia* version):

> Of recent date friction has occurred in many localities between departments of administration and the extraordinary commissions; the former are attempting to subordinate the latter to themselves on the authority of a resolution passed by the congress of representatives of provincial executive committees—but endorsed neither by the Sovnarkom nor by VTsIK. Therefore the Vecheka issues the following explanation to all provincial extraordinary commissions: the Vecheka is subordinated to the Sovnarkom; the Commissars for Justice and Internal Affairs exercise supervision [*imeiut kontrol*] over it, but the Vecheka is entirely independent in its activities, carrying out searches, arrests and executions, and reporting subsequently to the Sovnarkom and to VTsIK. Before carrying out searches, arrests and seizures in respect of members of the government or of VTsIK, the Vecheka informs the Sovnarkom and VTsIK, requesting their authorisation.
>
> Locally the Provincial and District Chekas are subordinated respectively to the Vecheka and to the Provincial Chekas. They are accountable to [Soviet] executive committees as a whole, but not to particular departments of the latter. The departments of Justice and Internal Affairs exercise supervision over Chekas, but do not interfere in their activities. If local Chekas need to carry out an arrest, search or seizure, etc., in respect of local government personnel or members of executive committees, they must seek the consent of the executive committee or of its chairman. If differences of opinion arise concerning the exercise of supervision, the matter should be referred to the executive committee for final decision. The departments of Justice and Internal Affairs cannot interfere in the activities of extraordinary commissions.[24]

It seems inconceivable that the Vecheka could have published—moreover in the Soviet Government's official newspaper—such a confident, dogmatic assertion of its sweeping powers and of its virtual independence of government and Soviets, unless this was done on Dzerzhinsky's express authority, no doubt with the backing of the all-powerful Communist Party. It is significant that even during Dzerzhinsky's concealed absence from Russia during most of October, the Vecheka continued to proclaim, without inhibition, its freedom from restraint by agencies of state or law. G. Shklovskii, writing in

the *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin*, of 6 October, went so far as to suggest that the Vecheka and its organs were the very incarnation of revolutionary justice and therefore, by implication, infallible: 'Some hypocritically minded Bolsheviks ... [are] intent on bringing the Chekas within juridical bounds ... thus making them dependent upon the dead letter of the law. People may object that there are revolutionary laws, but are the Chekas' methods not themselves those same revolutionary laws?'[25]

A measure of the arrogance displayed by the Chekas at this time was reflected in an instance quoted by Zinoviev in his speech (which otherwise lavished fulsome praise upon the Chekas) delivered at the Conference of Chekas of the Northern Commune in Petrograd in mid-October 1918: one Cheka, said Zinoviev, had actually debated the question whether, if the need arose, it was entitled to arrest the Sovnarkom.[26]

Defending the Chekas against renewed press attacks, Peters, in his *Izvestia* article of 17 October, sharply criticised suggestions that Chekas should be subordinated to the Soviets or to a Commissariat in order to mitigate their harsh measures and eradicate abuses. Peters argued that, despite a temporary lull in counter-revolutionary pressure in Moscow, consequent upon the Vecheka's suppression of conspiracies and arrest of some sixty 'imperialist agents', counter-revolutionary efforts had by no means passed their peak, and must continue to be opposed by the strong centralised forces of the Vecheka, carrying out their complicated tasks in a sustained and systematic manner. As regards misuse of authority, there was good reason to suppose that the Soviets were more likely than the Chekas to recruit personnel of dubious character.

The following day there was a swift riposte in *Pravda*, where S. I. Dukhovskii, secretary of the NKVD Collegium, insisted that the question of relations between Soviets and Chekas was of crucial importance. The matter had been debated recently by the NKVD Collegium and by VTsIK; it was agreed that these relations were abnormal, both centrally and locally. The vital point at issue, wrote Dukhovskii, was whether power in the provinces belonged to the Chekas or to the Soviets; for if the Vecheka's proposition were accepted, then partial guarantees of personal immunity would be enjoyed solely by members of the Sovnarkom, of VTsIK, and of local executive committees of the Soviets, whilst all other persons, including members of local Party committees, might at any time be executed—a report being rendered 'subsequently'—by any District Cheka operating within its territorial sphere of action. In such circumstances,

suggested Dukhovskii, the slogan 'All power to the Soviets' would soon be replaced by 'All power to the Chekas'. Even that might be acceptable if Cheka personnel consisted wholly of Party members. But local Party committees merely enjoyed the right to depute two members to sit on three-man supervisory collegia which were entitled to check and supervise the work of the Chekas—'without interfering in their activities'. Thus effective power in the provinces would be exercised not by the guiding and ruling Party, nor by the Soviet executive committees—the constitutionally elected organs for implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat—but by Chekas, which were only partially recruited from Party members. Besides, the executive committees constituted the administrative machinery of local government, embracing, under centralised direction, a whole variety of tasks; it was inadmissible to duplicate this system by a parallel apparatus of Chekas.[27]

Writing two days later, in *Izvestia* of 20 October, another prominent NKVD official, V. Tikhomirnov, reported that, in response to the NKVD's telegraphic inquiry to all provincial and district Soviets as to whether they were for or against the inclusion of local Chekas as a sub-department—albeit one enjoying a degree of autonomy—of the department of administration of local Soviet executive committees, out of 147 replies, 118 had favoured such subordination of Chekas.[28] And on 22 October, *Izvestia* carried a letter from Petrovskii, People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, crossing swords with Peters. Petrovskii declared that the Soviets, representing the best elements of the toiling people and of the Party, were a microcosm of the machinery of state, and had been responsible for creating the local Chekas in the first place, side by side with other agencies whose work was co-ordinated within the framework of Soviet executive committees. And now here was Peters asserting that Chekas were placed above executive committees. In reality, Chekas had already been disrupting local administration: they tended to find what they had been created to find—even when no subversion existed. Petrovskii criticised as unconstitutional the Vecheka's unilateral handing down of orders establishing the local independence of Chekas; he proposed, instead, a double subordination of Chekas: to their parent-body, the Vecheka, and to Soviet executive committees, following the normal procedure adopted by all Commissariats.

However, the same issue of *Izvestia* carried a reply by the Vecheka's Territorial Liaison Department to Dukhovskii's attack in *Pravda*, which it accused of being part of a *petit bourgeois* crusade aimed, under the slogan of Left Communism, at breaking up the

unity of the revolutionary front. This *Izvestia* article declared that the Vecheka, attached as it was to the Sovnarkom as an agency for combating counter-revolution, functioned independently of all departmental influence, and carried out the will of the central organs of the congress of Soviets. It was not for local Soviets to interfere in its activities, the more so as some *kulak*-dominated Soviets did not really represent the will of the masses. That centralised will of the revolutionary classes of workers and poorer peasants was epitomised by the institution of the Vecheka.

The Vecheka's claim to this special dispensation rested on the formality of its direct attachment to the Sovnarkom, by virtue of the as yet unpublished Sovnarkom resolution of 7 December 1917. However, there is no evidence indicating the existence at any time of any special machinery for Sovnarkom control over the Vecheka. The only provision made (by Sovnarkom resolution of 21 December 1917) in this sense was for supervision of the Vecheka by the NKIu, NKVD, and Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet—an arrangement totally neglected in practice.

THE VECHEKA STATUTE

One of the criticisms levelled at the Vecheka was precisely the absence of any legislation defining its status, functions, and powers. The Vecheka had not been intended to last; its very title—Extraordinary Commission—was indicative of its *ad hoc* character, and, as befitted a temporary, purely administrative agency, its original terms of reference were strictly circumscribed. The Constitution of the RSFSR, adopted on 10 July 1918 by the Fifth Congress of Soviets, contained no mention whatever of the Vecheka (nor, for that matter, of the Communist Party—the motor powering the Soviet state). Meanwhile, far from withering away, the Vecheka had steadily consolidated and extended its authority, to the point where its increasing intrusion into spheres of competence of government departments argued the practical need for a charter.

On 2 October 1918, by decision of the Party Central Committee, Dzerzhinsky was commissioned to draft a statute for the Vecheka.[29] However, pressed by Sverdlov, Chairman of VTsIK, and by Lenin, to take a rest and to visit his wife and child in Switzerland, Dzerzhinsky—accompanied by V. A. Avanesov, Secretary to VTsIK, and Vecheka Collegium member—left Russia *incognito* on 4 October for Switzerland, having shaved off his hair, beard, and moustache, and travelling under the name Felix Domanskii,[30] in the guise of a diplomatic courier.[31] The choice of Avanesov as his travel companion

may have been influenced by the circumstance of the latter's sojourn in Switzerland as a tuberculosis patient during 1907–13;[32] he was to die of the disease in 1930.[33]

Dzerzhinsky joined his wife and seven-year-old son in Bern, where Sofia Sigizmundovna was serving, since September, on the staff of the Soviet diplomatic mission.[34] Owing to the vicissitudes of revolutionary life, Dzerzhinsky had seen his son, Ian (in Polish Jan, or Jaś), only once before, for a few minutes in 1912;[35] Ian had been born on 23 June 1911 in a women's prison in Warsaw, undergoing separation from his mother eight months later when Sofia Sigizmundovna went into perpetual exile in Siberia.[36] Dzerzhinsky spent most of October 1918 with his family in Switzerland, holidaying for a week or so on Lake Lugano. He left Bern with Avanesov on 25 October, breaking his return journey briefly in Berlin, where he contacted the Soviet diplomatic mission, before continuing on to Russia on 28 October. Germany was already in the throes of revolution.[37]

With Dzerzhinsky away, and Peters deputising for him,[38] the Vecheka found itself exposed to continuing criticism. A particularly acrimonious debate was sparked off by an article in the *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin* of 6 October, entitled 'Why do you sentimentalise?' The article, signed by the chairmen of the Nolinsk Cheka and the Nolinsk Party Committee, protested against the Vecheka's pusillanimous release of the British special diplomatic agent, Robert Bruce Lockhart, who, according to a misleading report in *Izvestia* of 3 September, had been arrested in compromising circumstances, plotting the overthrow of the Soviet Government.[39] 'Why', inquired the Nolinsk correspondents, 'did you not subject this Lockhart to the most refined tortures ... the very description of which would make the counter-revolutionaries' blood run cold ... in order to extract the plentiful information and addresses such a bird would possess?' And the article concluded: 'Enough of sentimentalising; drop the unworthy play at 'diplomacy' and 'embassies'. *A dangerous scoundrel has been caught. Extract everything possible from him, and despatch him to the next world.*'[40] An editorial comment, whilst approving the essence of the Nolinsk Cheka's article, nevertheless considered that in this instance Soviet interests required the preservation of diplomatic courtesies.[41]

The threat of Cheka torture, supported as it was in principle by the Vecheka's official periodical, aroused heated controversy in the Bolshevik press.[42] The issue was debated on 25 October in the Party's Central Committee, which decided to close down the *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin* and to censure its editorial board.[43] The matter was

thereupon discussed that same day by the VTsIK Presidium which, whilst approving resort to terror-measures as indispensable in current conditions, repudiated torture as being 'unworthy, harmful and contrary to the interests of the struggle for communism'.[44] Despite an exculpatory leading article in the *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin* No. 6, of 27 October,[45] the latter proved to be the last number to appear in print. The Second Conference of Chekas, meeting over 25–28 November, demanded the continued publication of the periodical,[46] but to no avail.

Meanwhile, the conflict over subordination of Chekas to Soviets had reached such a pitch that Party and Government now took rapid action. On 25 October, the Central Committee approved the Vecheka draft statute prepared during Dzerzhinsky's absence, directing Sverdlov to put it to VTsIK.[47] That very day the VTsIK Presidium appointed a commission, chaired by Sverdlov and consisting of representatives of the NKIu, NKVD, Vecheka, and Moscow Soviet, charging it to work out a statute on the Chekas 'with the object of regularising the activity of the central and local Extraordinary Commissions and their relations with other Soviet institutions'.[48] On 28 October, VTsIK enacted the statute, which *Izvestia* published on 2 November 1918.[49]

Under this charter the Vecheka was declared to be the central organ co-ordinating the activities of local Chekas, and waging systematic war on counter-revolution, speculation, and misuse of authority throughout the RSFSR. It was an agency of the Sovnarkom—which appointed Vecheka Collegium members and approved the Vecheka budget—and it co-operated closely with the NKVD and NKIu, whose representatives sat on the Vecheka Collegium. Conversely, the Vecheka Chairman sat on the NKVD Collegium (thereby Dzerzhinsky recovered, *ex officio*, the NKVD Collegium seat briefly occupied by him in November–December 1917 as a founder-member of the first NKVD Collegium). The Vecheka and the Chekas enjoyed the right to organise their own armed detachments, whose size was for agreement between the Vecheka and local Soviet executive committees. All such Cheka armed detachments were on the establishment, and under the supervision, of the *Revvoensovet*—the recently formed Revolutionary War Council. Local Chekas were organised by Soviets (on an equal footing with the latter's other departments), whose executive committees were responsible for the appointment of Cheka collegium members and (subject to confirmation by the Vecheka) of their chairmen. Superior Chekas were entitled to depute representatives, exercising a deciding vote, to

attend meetings of junior Chekas. Decisions of lower Chekas could be suspended or countermanded by Chekas of higher instance. The budgets of local Chekas were submitted to the Vecheka after obtaining provisional approval of Soviet executive committees; the Vecheka's financial allocations for local Chekas were transmitted via the Soviets. The Vecheka was responsible for producing instructions for use by local Chekas.

This statue did nothing to resolve either the Vecheka's ambiguous relationship with the NKVD and NKIu, or its bitter struggle with the Soviets for control of local Chekas. Drafted as it was by the Vecheka and backed by the Central Committee, the statute weighted the balance of advantage where it already rested—in favour of the Extraordinary Commission, which, although theoretically supervised by the NKVD and NKIu (under the terms of Sovnarkom's ruling of 21 December 1917[50] as interpreted by Vecheka Order No. 47, published on 3 October 1918), in practice suffered no such constraint, and which brooked no interference by Soviets in local Cheka activity. Nor did the statute attempt to define the authorised powers and sanctions of the Vecheka, and the limitations thereon. As Krylenko, Chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal, scathingly commented: 'Call that a law!'[51] Indeed, in Krylenko's opinion, 'up to November 1918 it [the Vecheka] existed without any statutes or laws',[52] and he concluded tartly 'nor was any other law passed concerning the Vecheka throughout its existence'.[53]

FURTHER BIDS BY PARTY AND STATE TO CURB THE VECHEKA

Simultaneously, however, the Party's Central Committee, conscious of the widespread criticism attracted by the Vecheka, took steps to subject the latter to some form of political supervision, creating on 25 October a commission for that purpose, consisting of Kamenev, Stalin, and Kurskii, charging it to inquire into the activities of the Chekas without impairing their effectiveness in combating counter-revolution.[54] The same day the VTsIK Presidium went through the ritual of publicly appointing the Kamenev-Stalin-Kurskii commission as its own emanation 'so as to enable the VTsIK Presidium to acquaint itself in detail with the activity of the Vecheka and of the latter's departments'.[55] This select three-man commission (about whose further existence nothing has been revealed) may well have evolved into the Supervision and Inspection Commission[56] attached to the Vecheka, appointed (presumably by VTsIK, on behalf of the Party's Central Committee) on 2 November; it consisted of represen-

tatives of VTsIK, of the Party's Central Committee, the Moscow Region Party Committee, the NKVD, and NKIu.[57] Unfortunately, no information is available concerning the terms of reference, personnel, or proceedings of this commission. A littler later Krylenko stated in *Izvestia* that a commission appointed by the Communist Party's Central Committee to go into the question of reforming the Vecheka had disagreed so violently that it had simply ceased to function.[58] Its rapid demise is indicated also by the appointment, just one month later, of an even more imposing—if seemingly equally short-lived—commission for supervision of the Vecheka.

That radical measures were contemplated at this time for bringing the Chekas to heel is clear: in an *Izvestia* interview published on 6 November, Peters, after reviewing Cheka successes in various fields, promised the imminent introduction of properly organised machinery for inspection of Chekas throughout Soviet territory, and a severe purge of Chekist personnel.[59]

Perhaps in consequence of Party and VTsIK pressure for an accommodation between Vecheka and NKVD, these two departments opened direct negotiations on 14 November at an NKVD Collegium meeting attended, among others, by Petrovskii, Tikhomirnov, and Unshlikht for the NKVD, with Dzerzhinsky representing the Vecheka, and Latsis owing allegiance to both parties.[60] At this conference Petrovskii and Dzerzhinsky agreed on the need to establish a framework for collaboration between NKVD and Vecheka, based on the broad principles enunciated in the Vecheka statute of 28 October. With surprising generosity, Dzerzhinsky now proposed that NKVD representatives should not only sit on the Vecheka Collegium and on the Supervision and Inspection Commission of the Vecheka, but should also be admitted to the Vecheka Presidium and the Territorial Liaison Department, thus giving the NKVD a voice, if not a veto, in the formulation of Cheka policy and in the administration of local Chekas. It was agreed that a joint NKVD-Vecheka commission should draw up an instruction indicating the division of functions between the two organisations and clarifying the question of use of the Militia by the Chekas; Unshlikht and Tikhomirnov would represent the NKVD on this commission. Latsis, or in his absence Unshlikht, was nominated as the NKVD's representative on the Vecheka Supervision and Inspection Commission, but, on Dzerzhinsky's insistence, without the right of veto.[61]

Among the resolutions passed on 28 November by the Second All-Russian Conference of Chekas was the pious recommendation that local Chekas should co-operate closely with all Soviet organs;

also adopted was a more practical proposal, designed to minimise friction in such relationships, prescribing that chairmen of departments of administration in local Soviets should sit on the collegia of local Chekas.[62]

Another product of the Second Conference of Chekas was the secret Instruction to Local Chekas, which, as finalised on 1 December 1918, prescribed, or reaffirmed, regulations regarding the mutual relationship between Chekas and Soviets.[63] Under its terms, Soviets were confirmed in their duty to organise local Chekas; the latter were still authorised to arrest Party and Soviet personnel, providing they notified the employing institution within twenty-four hours of arrest. Soviets enjoyed no such reciprocal authority; their recourse was to report the misdeeds of a Cheka to the next senior Cheka level. District Chekas were limited to meting out punishments not exceeding three months detention; more severe penalties required the sanction of Provincial Chekas. However, this limitation contained a yawning loophole; paragraph 37 of the Instruction read: 'Since the Extraordinary Commissions are combat organs in moments of revolutionary crisis, they may, if it should prove vital for the suppression of illegal activities, impose administrative—but not judicial—punishments by way of fines, exile, executions, etc.'

Moreover, paragraph 38 authorised Provincial and Regional Chekas, as also Front and Army Chekas, to apply 'the supreme penalty' as of right. However, the Instruction—which superseded the regulations of 11 and 13 June and the supplementary ones of August 1918—made one important concession: it ruled (paragraph 27) that supervision of day-to-day activities of local Cheka personnel should be exercised by three-man supervisory collegia *(kontrolnye kollegii)* composed of representatives of the local Soviet executive committee, Party Committee, and Cheka.[64] Thus, for the first time, representatives of local Soviets were admitted into local Cheka supervisory collegia, which had hitherto been limited to one Chekist plus two local Party Committee representatives.[65]

The question of supervision over the Vecheka and its territorial apparatus remained a burning issue for some time to come. Significantly, a top-level Commission (consisting of Lenin, Nevskii, and Stalin) of the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defence (SRKO) was established, at the SRKO's very first meeting on 1 December 1918, to review the organisation and activities of the Vecheka, and held its first meeting on 3 December.[66] It was presided over by Lenin, and those present included Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, Krasin, Sklianskii, and Nevskii. Judging by the order of speakers, something of a duel

developed between Dzerzhinsky and, on the other side, Sklianskii, Trotsky's deputy chairman in the War Commissariat and in the *Revvoensovet*, and Nevskii, Commissar for Communications.[67] Decisions taken at this meeting included the following: top posts in the local Chekas to be limited to Party members of not less than two years standing; the statute on Railway Chekas to be revised; false allegations to be punished by execution; persons under arrest to be freed immediately if vouched for by two collegium members of a commissariat, or two members of a city or regional Party Committee, or by all the members of a local or central trade union board; arrests of engineers and technicians to be preceded, where possible, by advance notification to their employing agency; the Supervision and Inspection Department *(kontrolno-revizionnyi otdel)* of the Vecheka to be expanded immediately and to include two representatives of the Party's special investigation organ.[68] These decisions were converted into regulations and instructions.

The Vecheka must have been undergoing a considerable crisis of public confidence for it to occupy the attention of the high-powered Defence Council (SRKO) Commission. The Defence Council itself had only just been established, by VTsIK resolution of 30 November, for the purpose of co-ordinating the Soviet Republic's overall war effort in the prevailing conditions of grave military and economic peril.[69] Its designated members included Lenin, presiding in his capacity as Chairman of the Sovnarkom; Trotsky, as *Revvoensovet* Chairman; Nevskii, as Commissar for Communications, and Stalin, as representative of VTsIK. There is no record available of further meetings (if indeed there were any) of the Defence Council's watchdog commission on the Vecheka; it seems likely that, having taken some decisions designed to correct the more glaring abuses observable in the Chekas, but otherwise accepting a vital need for the existence of a political police to effect ruthless suppression of all opposition on the home front, the high level Commission lapsed, as the Defence Council turned its attention to other pressing matters. But the volume of criticism was such that it could not be ignored. As an editorial footnote in the Soviet official volume of documents on the Vecheka puts it:

> The enemies of Soviet power, sustaining defeat after defeat, howled in bitter spite about the 'atrocities' of the Cheka. Particularly zealous in this were the Mensheviks and SRs, supported by Trotskyists and Bukharinites. In December 1918 a campaign of lies and calumny was mounted against the Vecheka. Its enemies demanded the liquidation of the Vecheka. The Party, the Soviet Government, and V. I. Lenin personally, thoroughly investigated all

indications of deficiencies in the work of the Vecheka. Apart from the commission attached to the Council of Defence, this problem was looked into by the VTsIK Presidium which, at its meeting on 26 December 1918, appointed a special inspection commission [*revizionnaia komissiia*] for scrutiny of the activities of the Vecheka. The Vecheka's work was scrupulously examined, and was acknowledged to be correct.'[70]

Despite the allusion to Trotskyists, it is unlikely that Trotsky, a hard-liner on terror—as witness his polemicising pamphlet of 1920, *Terrorism and Communism*[71]—and a believer in the indispensability of the Chekas to the Revolution, would have lent himself to any campaign against the Vecheka, but Nevskii and Sklianskii, who played a prominent part in the Defence Council Commission's debate on 3 December, and who sat in the Sovnarkom (Sklianskii as Trotsky's deputy in the War Commissariat), both belonged to Trotsky's camp.[72] The allusion to Bukharinites undoubtedly refers to Bukharin's strong criticism of the Vecheka at this time,[73] which, although not publicised, made its mark with Lenin, whilst the columns of *Pravda*, of which Bukharin was editor, gave (unlike *Izvestia*) much greater prominence to the Vecheka's detractors than to its apologists.[74] Moreover, Bukharin, who had recently returned from Germany, reported to the Party on Rosa Luxemburg's and Franz Mehring's very adverse personal reactions to the Bolshevik terror.[75] Rosa Luxemburg had in fact by then already written her highly critical pamphlet, *The Russian Revolution*, and had sent it, in September 1918, from prison to Paul Levi, although the latter refrained from publishing it until 1922.[76]

The statement that the Vecheka's enemies demanded its liquidation is borne out by recently revealed Soviet evidence: on 8 January 1919, L. B. Kamenev put to Lenin a draft resolution proposing the immediate abolition of the Vecheka and all its organs, and the transfer of its functions to the Revolutionary Tribunals, which should be supervised centrally by a special department attached to VTsIK.[77] In all probability this resolution in fact came from the VTsIK Presidium, on the recommendation of its special inspection commission appointed on 26 December to inquire into the Vecheka. If so, then this refutes the assertion that 'the Vecheka's work was scrupulously examined and was acknowledged to be correct'.

Other evidence, derived from Bukharin's confidences to Boris Nicolaevsky, indicates that 'an influential group in the Sovnarkom' mounted pressure during this period for the abolition of the Vecheka and the transfer of its functions to a reorganised Commissariat for Justice.[78] The similarity between the two initiatives for the Vecheka's

abolition suggests that they may have been identical; perhaps the Sovnarkom group's pressure was exerted through the VTsIK Presidium, or maybe the Sovnarkom was named in error for VTsIK. Neither Bukharin nor Kamenev sat in the Sovnarkom at this time but, significantly, they were both members of the VTsIK Presidium as at January 1920[79] and, very probably, also a year earlier.

Kamenev did not have his way on the Vecheka abolition proposal, but his initiative must have contributed to the rapidly ensuing abolition of the Vecheka's controversial District Chekas, and was to bear further fruit, as we shall see, in the VTsIK decree of 17 February 1919, transferring most of the remaining Chekas' judicial and punitive powers to the Revolutionary Tribunals.

ABOLITION OF DISTRICT CHEKAS

Bowing to state and Party pressures, the Vecheka now underwent organisational surgery. In order to placate critics of the free-wheeling system of District Chekas—which had committed some of the worst atrocities of the Red Terror,[80] a VTsIK Presidium decree of 20 January 1919,[81] published on 24 January, abolished the District Chekas, ostensibly at the Vecheka's own request.[82] The decree ordained that 'in the interests of correct organisation and of more rational combating of counter-revolution, speculation and misconduct in office', the District Chekas were to be wound up within twenty days of the decree's publication. All the records, remaining funds, prisoners, and active personnel of the District Chekas were to be transferred to the Provincial Chekas. In his report to VTsIK on 17 February 1919, Dzerzhinsky attributed this measure to the improvement in the security situation brought about by the Red Terror, which now made it possible for the Vecheka to put an end to its expansion, and indeed to contract its apparatus.[83]

This was a notable victory for the Commissariat for Internal Affairs. However, this retrenchment was not absolute: under the terms of the decree, it was open to local Soviets and, more to the point, to Provincial Chekas, to petition for the preservation of individual District Chekas, and in practice a number of District Chekas continued to function 'on the decision of local Party organs'.[84] The Fourth Conference of Provincial Chekas (3–6 February 1920) solved the Vecheka's problem by approving the Vecheka Collegium's decision of 20 December 1919 to disband the remaining District Chekas and to replace them by political bureaux attached to local administrations of Militia at district Soviet level, such politburos being headed by district Militia chiefs under the overall direction of

the NKVD, which by then came under Dzerzhinsky as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs. By mid-1920, the reorganisation had been completed in co-operation with local Communist Party Committees;[85] politburos now did duty for the whole network of District Chekas abolished since February 1919. These politburos were required to fulfil tasks set by Provincial Chekas and to report on political conditions within the given district.[86] Consequently, the considerable damage suffered by the Vecheka through the dissolution of the District Chekas was to a large extent repaired.

CONFLICT WITH THE COMMISSARIAT FOR JUSTICE

At the height of the Red Terror the Vecheka also came under severe attack from the representatives of Soviet justice. Upon the withdrawal of the LSRs from coalition government in March 1918, the Vecheka was rid of the obstructive tactics of Steinberg's Commissariat, but it presently crossed swords with Steinberg's Bolshevik successors as Commissars for Justice, P. I. Stuchka and D. I. Kurskii.[87] As a prelude, at the Second All-Russian Congress of Regional and Provincial Commissars of Justice, held in Moscow on 2–6 July 1918, complaints were voiced that in some places local Chekas not only acted independently of their Soviet executive committees, but also attempted to appropriate the functions of the Commissariat for Justice, whose system of Revolutionary Tribunals they seemed bent on duplicating. The Justice Commissar for Saratov Province demanded that many of the cases dealt with by the Chekas should be turned over wholly to the Revolutionary Tribunals, 'as otherwise there will arise a sort of state within the state which will increasingly extend its powers'. By contrast, Comrade Krestinskii observed that friction inevitably arose between the law and administrative organs such as the Chekas, and that at a time when war was being waged by the Chekas against counter-revolution 'the work of justice must take second place, its sphere of activity undoubtedly being restricted. Consequently the representatives of justice must once and for all realise where their rights and powers ended.' But other speakers returned to the attack. The Justice Commissar for Orel Province reported that the Orel Provincial Cheka's chairman had declared: 'I am subordinate to no one; my power is such that I can myself shoot anyone.' And indeed his Cheka had executed four men, one of whom had no connection with the crime in question. The Justice Commissar for Kursk, for his part, complained that the work of the Chekas consisted in 'filling the prisons and keeping people there without any safeguards, whilst the Commissariat of Justice is bound

by a decree precisely limiting the period of detention to forty-eight hours. The Extraordinary Commission pays no heed to this time-limitation, asserting that this decree does not apply to it.'

The Congress passed a resolution recommending that the provincial executive committees of the Soviets should subject Cheka personnel to close scrutiny, and should maintain direct supervision over Cheka activities; also that Chekas should concern themselves with counter-revolution but not with speculation.[88] It is noteworthy that this clash between the Commissariat for Justice and the Chekas on account of the latter's arbitrary conduct and wanton application of the death penalty preceded by two whole months the introduction of the official Red Terror.

Although, by the Sovnarkom's resolution of 21 December 1917[89] the NKIu, jointly with the NKVD and the Petrograd Soviet Presidium, theoretically exercised supervision over the Vecheka,[90] in practice the Vecheka suffered no such constraint. Subsequently, the VTsIK statute on the Vecheka of 28 October (published 2 November) 1918 prescribed that representatives of the NKIu and NKVD should sit on the Vecheka Collegium. However, the statute (whose very validity was queried by N. V. Krylenko on the grounds that it was endorsed not by VTsIK itself but by the VTsIK Presidium) was regarded by the NKIu as an altogether unsatisfactory law,[91] and made a poor basis on which to build. After an initial attempt at co-operation, the NKIu representative on the Vecheka Collegium staged a demonstrative exit, never to return, and henceforward the NKIu and the Vecheka remained, as Krylenko put it, in a state of 'open warfare and ruptured diplomatic relations'.[92]

Interestingly enough, the NKIu's representative sitting on the Vecheka Collegium was none other than M. Iu. Kozlovskii, who, emerging now in the role of champion of liberty, persistently accused the Vecheka Collegium of being responsible for unjustifiable repression. Dzerzhinsky's consequent complaint against Kozlovskii was heard, on 19 December 1918, by the Party Central Committee, which recommended that Kozlovskii be replaced on the Vecheka Collegium by another NKIu representative.[93] The resolution of the conflict between the Vecheka and the NKIu was entrusted to Stalin[94], evidently without effect.

The adoption of the makeshift Vecheka statute of 28 October immediately preceded the First Congress of Chairmen of Revolutionary Tribunals, which met from 29 October to 3 November 1918. The Congress, having debated the Vecheka's appropriation of the right to pronounce sentence of life or death through its three- and

five-man boards *(troiki* and *piaterki)*—functioning inscrutably and mercilessly, without any set judicial principles or procedures, and without right of appeal—passed a resolution severely criticising the Chekas and recommending that, where these trespassed on the terrain of Revolutionary Tribunals, their activities should be restrained. For, after all, the Revolutionary Tribunals were themselves expressly charged to combat counter-revolution 'with absolutely unrestricted right of choice as to methods of repression' but, unlike the Chekas, they constituted courts of law, however harsh their sentences.[95] The Chekas, by contrast, had been established as investigative agencies, though in the crisis of Civil War they had taken it upon themselves to settle matters falling properly within the Tribunals' jurisdiction, thus arrogating the functions of courts of law. The Congress resolution continued:

> Without denying the services which the Extraordinary Commissions have already rendered to the proletarian revolution, and without excluding the possibility that another revolutionary emergency could occur when the need for instant and ruthless repression might again relegate the usual methods of combating counter-revolution by legal process, the All-Russian Congress of responsible Revolutionary Tribunal functionaries nevertheless considers it to be its duty to point to those dark features which have conspicuously characterised the activities of the Chekas due to the latter's—admittedly forced—rejection of that requirement of legal process, publicity, and due also to the absence of a legal definition of the rights and powers of the Chekas in carrying out the tasks laid upon them.

Consequently, the Congress considered essential (1) the immediate enactment of a precise statute concerning the rights and powers of the Chekas, (2) a clear demarcation of the conditions under which extra-judicial methods were permissible and indeed mandatory, (3) the introduction throughout the Chekas of a system of independent supervision and accountability ensuring the Revolutionary Tribunals' right to supervise the Chekas' investigative procedures, and empowering the Tribunals' own investigation commissions to bring criminal prosecutions against Cheka personnel, who should not enjoy immunity. Above all, the Congress considered that in the normal way cases investigated by the Chekas should then be handed over to the Tribunals or other judicial institutions for trial, instead of being resolved extra-judicially by the Chekas. The Congress thereupon recommended that a number of specific regulations should be issued forthwith to Chekas, designed to guarantee that the Chekas never took independent action in cases already being dealt with by the Tribunals or other judicial bodies.[96]

As we have seen, the Vecheka statute did nothing to meet, or rather to anticipate, the particular requirements put forward by the Congress of Chairmen of Revolutionary Tribunals. However, public opinion on these issues found broad expression at the Sixth Congress of Soviets, held during 6–9 November 1918, which on 8 November passed a resolution, formulated as a statute and published on 6 December, optimistically declaring that during the past year of revolutionary struggle 'the Russian working class had evolved the fundamental laws of the RSFSR, strict observance of which was essential for the development and strengthening of the power of the workers and peasants'. The Congress of Soviets insisted that all laws, resolutions, and instructions issued by the Soviet central authorities must be scrupulously obeyed, but it undermined its own case by recognising that measures contravening or bypassing such laws were permissible 'in exceptional conditions of civil war and struggle against counter-revolution'.[97] This saving clause in effect validated the Chekas' recourse to arbitrary action, whilst the formalistic safeguards stipulated in the Congress statute were largely disregarded.

A couple of months later, on 23 January 1919, a heated debate between Cheka representatives (including Peters and Latsis)[98] and state jurists took place at a meeting of the Moscow city branch of the Communist Party, in the course of which Krylenko,[99] Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal, and Diakonov, Chairman of the Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal, strongly criticised the Chekas for the general distrust they inspired and the ill repute they brought not only upon themselves but also upon the Party and Government by reason of their many misdeeds, their infiltration by criminal elements, their arbitrary conduct and non-accountability; the 'Tribunalists' proposed that the Chekas should be deprived of their powers to pass sentence by administrative procedure, and should be transformed into investigative departments of the Revolutionary Tribunals. However, Krylenko's resolution, affirming that the existence of Revolutionary Tribunals rendered the Chekas superfluous, was defeated, allegedly because the Chekists packed the meeting.[100]

A recently published biography of Dzerzhinsky, with the KGB's First Deputy Chairman as chief editor, similarly asserts that leading spirits in the People's Commissariat for Justice formulated a proposal intended to deprive the Chekas of their extra-judicial powers and to subordinate them to the Revolutionary Tribunals. According to the same authority, there were also those in Party and Soviet quarters who, not content with the abolition of the District Chekas, considered

that the Provincial Chekas and even the Vecheka itself should likewise be abolished, their judicial investigative functions being transferred to the Revolutionary Tribunals, their criminal investigative functions going to the conventional criminal investigation service, and their task of suppressing counter-revolutionary insurrection falling to the Militia. The case was argued on the grounds that the most critical period of Civil War was over, and with it the need for the Chekas.[101]

During most of January, while the public debate on the Chekas continued to rage, Dzerzhinsky was absent from Moscow (3–29 January) on a commission of inquiry on the eastern front. Back in the capital, he clashed on 30 January with Krylenko at a conference of the Party's Moscow branch, opposing Krylenko's proposals for dissolution of the Chekas. He argued that the time of crisis had not yet passed, and that only the Chekas could deal with the enemies entrenched in the state administration; so long as the Civil War continued, the Chekas remained indispensable, and their special powers a necessity.[102]

A fortnight later, Krylenko scored a telling tactical victory over the Vecheka in the Kosyrev case. In September 1918, F. M. Kosyrev had been appointed by Dzerzhinsky personally to be deputy chairman of the Vecheka's Supervision and Inspection Collegium, formed to investigate complaints about illegal actions committed by Chekists and other state officials. This agency, according to Krylenko, possessed absolute authority to examine and review the conduct and cases of all the Vecheka's organs and personnel, excepting its presidium. It subsequently emerged that in 1908 Kosyrev had been sentenced to ten years penal servitude for murder and robbery; after the February Revolution he had obtained his release by pretending to be a political prisoner, and presently joined the Vecheka. In mid-February 1919 he was prosecuted by the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal on charges of misusing his position to extort bribes from relatives of persons held under investigation by the Vecheka; Kosyrev admitted to having accumulated 100,000 roubles in the International Bank of Chicago. Dzerzhinsky and other prominent Chekists such as Peters and Savinov[103] appeared in court; Dzerzhinsky testified as a character witness on Kosyrev's behalf, describing him as an 'experienced and conscientious investigator', and he even accused Krylenko, who acted as prosecutor, of being more interested in discrediting the Vecheka than in establishing Kosyrev's innocence or guilt. Krylenko was at pains to refute this, and paid lavish tribute to the Vecheka's past services in defence of the threatened régime, but maintained that

in the present period of revolutionary legality the Revolutionary Tribunal was responsible for applying ruthless justice to individual Chekists who by their crimes brought disgrace upon the Revolution. (In passing, Krylenko pointed an accusing finger at another member of the Vecheka's Supervision and Inspection Collegium, a certain Nazarenko, a former jailbird and a crony of Kosyrev's.) Consequently, Krylenko demanded the death penalty for Kosyrev, who was duly sentenced to be shot. Ironically, the defence vainly cited the absence of any decree authorising use of the death penalty. The case was fully reported in *Pravda*.[104]

THE PARTY DEFENDS THE VECHEKA

Meanwhile the Chekists, wilting under the persistent barrage of censure, had appealed to the supreme arbiter, the Communist Party, for support. On 28 January 1919, *Izvestia* printed a long communication from the Vecheka's Party fraction, signed among others by Peters, pleading that, in the changed political situation, instead of confronting an open foe the Chekas now had to contend with the sabotaging intelligentsia which, often holding Party tickets, had infiltrated the Soviet administration. With increasing frequency Soviet officials figured in Cheka arrest lists, and their employing departments bombarded the Chekas with interventions, requesting their release.

> Unpleasant incidents have occurred. Work in the Extraordinary Commissions has become excessively difficult and thankless. One has had to fight a foe who is no longer in the enemy camp but has merged with our own ranks. In such conditions mistakes could of course occur, and it cannot be denied that there have been mistakes. ... Work in the Chekas is exceptionally hard and responsible. Anyone who has not himself worked in these Commissions finds it difficult to comprehend why individual workers, even Communists, so frequently get onto a slippery slope and fall. ... The Chekas themselves often sentence these to death. This slippery path threatens all persons of weak character who have joined the Chekas and have obtained responsible appointments.

In implementing the Red Terror, continued the *Izvestia* letter, the Chekas were acting on Communist Party directives, and they hardly deserved the abuse aimed by a certain stratum of the Communist Party at loyal, hardworking, unflinching Chekists.[105]

The Party responded decisively. On 8 February[106] *Izvestia* printed a highly significant letter signed 'Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party', addressed 'To the Communist Workers of all the Extraordinary Commissions'. After describing the counter-

revolutionary forces ranged against the newly born Soviet régime, the Central Committee declared: 'The struggle against these elements had to be conducted most resolutely, energetically, pitilessly, stopping at nothing. The judicial institutions of the Soviet Republic could not accomplish this task. The need for a special organ of merciless summary justice was recognised by our whole Party from top to bottom. Our Party entrusted this task to the Vecheka, equipping it with extraordinary plenary powers, and placing it in direct contact with the Party centre.'

The Central Committee acknowledged that the basic task placed upon the Vecheka by the Party had been carried out successfully, and that Cheka workers had shown firmness, devotion to the proletarian Revolution, and loyalty to the Party. At the same time, the Central Committee was fully aware of the deficiencies and mistakes of the Chekas, which, like other organs for the proletarian struggle, had been infiltrated by criminal elements. Nevertheless, the Chekas had smashed the enemies of the Revolution on many internal fronts.

> In this work the Chekas were the weapon of the proletariat which mercilessly strikes the enemy. ... The Red Terror ... demonstrated to all enemies of Communism that the proletariat is not willing to let slip from its grasp the fruits of its October victory over the bourgeoisie, and is ready to reply tenfold to every blow it receives. The Chekas, which had to carry out their difficult task in conditions of the most cruel, merciless period of the Civil War, and which were placed by the will of the Party in the most advanced posts, were merely fulfilling the will of the Party and proletariat when they tirelessly hunted down the enemies of the working class.

The changed situation, the successes over counter-revolutionary conspiracies at home, and military successes in the field would affect the character and functions of the Chekas:

> In this sense the Central Committee cannot deny the legitimacy of the wide discussion of the question of the Chekas in Party circles, at Party meetings and in the Party press. But at the same time the Central Committee is also forced to state that often comrades who have criticised the Chekas, not only did not confine themselves to the limits of businesslike Party discussion, but frequently adopted a wholly indecent tone, forgetting that the Chekas were founded, exist and work solely as the direct organs of the Party, under its direction and supervision. Precisely because such criticism is not calculated to improve the situation, but merely leads to weakening the Party's will, the Central Committee considers it essential to address this letter to Communist workers of the Vecheka.[107]

By thus acknowledging the Vecheka as the Party's own creation, functioning under its direct supervision, expressing its will and fulfilling its directives, the Central Committee effectively ended the

widespread criticism of the Vecheka in Party quarters, and enhanced its standing *vis-à-vis* rival departments of state which were intent on clipping its wings. At the same time, however, in deference to the Vecheka's critics, the Central Committee served notice in its open letter that it proposed to introduce new regulations governing the work of the Chekas, whereby the latter would concentrate on watching counter-revolutionary activity and on combating armed insurrection, whilst the function of passing sentence would be transferred to new, reorganised Revolutionary Tribunals.

THE CHEKAS YIELD GROUND TO THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNALS

On 4 February 1919, the Party's Central Committee debated the issue of the powers wielded by the Chekas and decided on their radical restriction: a commission consisting of Dzerzhinsky,[108] Kamenev, and Stalin was appointed to work out a statute along specified guidelines for the reform of the Chekas and the Revolutionary Tribunals.[109] The proposed statute was considered by the VTsIK Presidium on 11 February,[110] and on 17 February it was formally introduced at a plenary session of VTsIK by Dzerzhinsky. In his long speech the latter, after reviewing the Vecheka's dedicated and meritorious service, explained that since large-scale counter-revolutionary opposition to the Bolshevik régime had been crushed, it was no longer necessary for the Vecheka to apply mass repression, and consequently the power to pass sentence in cases initiated by the Chekas would now be vested in the Revolutionary Tribunals.[111] VTsIK immediately passed the decree, which was published on 21 February under the title 'Concerning the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission'.[112] It deprived the Chekas of the right to pass sentence, and imposed a time limit of one month on their investigation of cases, with the important proviso, however, that such investigation could be extended by agreement of local Soviets, and that the Chekas could nevertheless exercise summary justice in the event of armed rebellion and banditry and in areas under martial law. Furthermore, the Chekas were accorded the unrestricted right to confine persons in concentration camps, by administrative decision. These reservations afforded the Vecheka considerable latitude for arbitrary action, especially as it became Vecheka practice to circumvent the statute's restrictions by transferring prisoners earmarked for execution to localities where martial law applied; moreover, the resurgence of Civil War in mid-1919 resulted in wide application of martial law, and in

consequent extention of the Chekas' prerogative of summary justice to cover a broad variety of offences.[113]

All the same, the February decree went some way towards restoring, if only temporarily, the authority of the Revolutionary Tribunals at the expense of the Chekas, the latter being theoretically reduced to the role of investigative agencies, subject to supervision by the Tribunals; clauses in the decree authorised the Tribunals to check on Cheka investigative practices, and on conditions of detention of Cheka prisoners. Inevitably, in circumstances of Civil War such supervision remained unimplemented.[114] However, the decree strengthened and streamlined the Revolutionary Tribunals themselves, reducing their size to three men, simplifying their procedure, and speeding their deliberations, giving them discretion to dispense with calling witnesses, and exempting their sentences from appeal; indeed, session in public, in the presence of the accused, was one of the few safeguards which distinguished their trial procedure from that of the Chekas.

In his concluding remarks introducing this decree, Dzerzhinsky hailed the measure as a triumph of rationalisation:

> We previously had two organs: the Extraordinary Commissions and the Revolutionary Tribunals, which functioned completely independently, simultaneously and along parallel lines. The present reorganisation will abolish such duplication. The new statute brings about a division of labour and mutual complementation. The Extraordinary Commission will supply the Revolutionary Tribunal with evidence to enable the latter to judge. In this way there will be no clash, none of the delay ensuing when our cases were referred to the Revolutionary Tribunal where they languished far too long, to the point of losing their relevance. None of this will happen now. The Revolutionary Tribunal will be completely reorganised, eliminating all unnecessary formality, and restricting its membership to three. Nor will there be that discord which prevailed between the Extraordinary Commission and the Revolutionary Tribunal.[115]

A year later a further decree followed, designed to harmonise and regulate still more effectively relations between the Chekas and the Revolutionary Tribunals. The VTsIK decree of 18 March 1920,[116] published on 27 March, unequivocally stated that the Revolutionary Tribunals, having no investigative apparatus of their own, were dependent on the Chekas and on Cheka Special Departments (OOs) for the investigation of cases. The Chekas were now liberally compensated for their limitation to an investigative role by gaining a direct voice in the Revolutionary Tribunals' process of trial and sentence: the Tribunals were instructed to include on their three-man panels a Collegium member of the local Provincial Cheka—who

would naturally act to safeguard Cheka interests. Similarly, under this decree Revolutionary Military Tribunals and Revolutionary Military Railway Tribunals were to include on their respective boards the chief of the relevant Cheka Special Department, in the one case, and a representative from the local Area Transport Cheka, in the other—but that is to anticipate mention of the creation of such Tribunals. The Chekas were confirmed in their right to commit people to detention camps by administrative decision; more precisely, the decree of March 1920 laid down that, in order to deal with infringements of labour discipline, to ensure revolutionary order and to combat 'parasitical elements of the population', the Vecheka had the right to commit to forced labour camps (the decree of February 1919 had specified concentration camps), for a maximum period of five years, persons against whom there was insufficient evidence for criminal prosecution.

On 17 April 1920, the Vecheka Presidium issued an instruction (No. 48)[117] to all Provincial Chekas (with copies to Provincial Revolutionary Tribunals), signed jointly by Dzerzhinsky and by Krylenko (as member of the Appeal Tribunal), providing detailed guidance on the decree of 18 March. It was up to each Cheka to decide, after completing an investigation, whether the case should be referred for prosecution to the People's Court (the most likely course to be pursued), or to the Revolutionary Tribunal (in more serious cases), or whether the prisoner should simply be committed to a forced labour camp. That, even by 1920, harmony had not yet been achieved between Chekas and Tribunals was evident from the hope expressed in the instruction that the Cheka representative sitting on the Provincial Revolutionary Tribunal would be able to establish the closest co-operation between the two institutions and thus help to end 'the antagonism and inter-departmental friction which had hitherto been observable between [them]'. Nevertheless, the very fact that Dzerzhinsky and Krylenko could issue an agreed instruction in this matter indicated that the state of 'open warfare and ruptured diplomatic relations' between the NKIu and Vecheka was on the mend, even if the infiltration of the Revolutionary Tribunals by the Chekas (and not the other way round) was a clear measure of Chekist supremacy over the organs of law at this stage of the Civil War.

HOSTAGES AND 'SPECIALISTS'

During 1918–20 the Vecheka came under fire from various government departments whose 'specialists' were among members of the bourgeoisie held as hostages for the good behaviour of their class in

the raging Civil War. The Bolshevik practice of taking hostages owed much to Lenin's initiative and encouragement. In his telegram of 7 July 1918 to Stalin, Lenin, in the context of the LSR Rising, stated: 'We have hundreds of LSRs as hostages. We must mercilessly crush everywhere these miserable and hysterical adventurers who have become a weapon in the hands of the counter-revolutionaries.'[118] More specifically, on 10 August 1918, Lenin drafted a decree, prescribing that in every small grain-producing district[119] twenty-five to thirty hostages should be selected from among the wealthy inhabitants, who would be answerable with their lives for delivery of excess grain.[120] Nor were poorer peasants exempt: on 15 February 1919, the Defence Council instructed that Petrovskii, Dzerzhinsky, and others should take immediate steps to arrest members of Soviet executive committees and Committees of the Poor in localities where snow clearance of railway lines proved unsatisfactory; hostages taken from the peasantry should be shot if the snow clearance remained undone.[121] A month later Lenin signed a further Defence Council resolution threatening the arrest of local Cheka chairmen unless they themselves arrested the Soviet officials responsible for such inefficiency.[122]

During the 'official' Red Terror, the Bolsheviks resorted to large-scale executions of hostages, as already described. Throughout Soviet Russia hostages were taken in hundreds and thousands. In Nizhnii Novgorod, for instance, the local Cheka bulletin published a list of 41 persons shot, and the same day (according to another Nizhnii newspaper) 700 hostages were seized so that 'every murder, and every attempted murder, of a Communist' could be avenged by the shooting of hostages seized from the bourgeoisie.[123] According to Latsis, the Vecheka took 3,061 hostages in 1918 and 10,050 during the first seven months of 1919.[124] However, these statistics appear ridiculously inadequate, given the scale of the Red Terror, and in the light of such instances as that quoted for Nizhnii Novgorod.

The purpose of the Bolshevik hostage system was, as described by the historian of the Vecheka, Sofinov, 'to paralyse the subversive activity of the particular class element from which the hostages were taken'.[125] Popular revulsion against penalising innocent hostages found expression in the resolution moved by Kamenev on 6 November 1918 at the first session of the Sixth All-Russian Congress of Soviets; the resolution, which advocated several amnesty measures, proposed: 'Release of all hostages, except those whose temporary detention is essential to ensure the safety of comrades fallen into enemy hands. The need for further detention of this type of hostage can only be

determined, in each individual case, by the Vecheka. No other organisation is authorised to take or detain hostages.'[126]

Certain practical measures for the protection of 'specialists' against arrest and detention as hostages resulted from decisions taken on 3 December 1918 by the Defence Council's Commission on the Vecheka. A resolution, adopted by the Defence Council on 11 December and published three days later as a decree, regulated the procedure governing the arrest of senior officials and specialists. Observing that the Vecheka's arrests of personnel employed in Soviet institutions often prejudiced their performance, the Defence Council instructed that, whenever possible, Chekas should give advance notice to Soviet institutions and to industrial and railroad enterprises whose senior employees or specialists, engineers or technicians were to be arrested; in any event the Chekas must inform the employing bodies within forty-eight hours of such arrests. Representatives of People's Commissariats and of provincial and city Party Committees were now entitled to participate in the investigation of their arrested employees and to secure the release of those for whom they could produce sufficient guarantees. A similar entitlement was extended to provincial and city Soviets and to trade unions.[127]

This was quickly followed, on 19 December, by Vecheka Order No. 113,[128] signed by Peters, strongly criticising local Chekas for their numerous indiscriminate arrests of bourgeois technical specialists essential to state interests;[129] the Vecheka stressed that Chekas must abide by the central policies of Party and Government, refraining from terrorising the peaceful population, the workers, and poorer peasants, and giving the *kulaks*, petit bourgeois elements, and all socialists an opportunity to work, whilst keeping these last categories under unobtrusive strict surveillance; they were to be arrested only when there was certainty of obtaining concrete proof of treasonable conduct. Terror must be halted in reoccupied Soviet areas.

For the time being these governmental provisions and Vecheka directives curbed the local Chekas' excess of zeal, but the quandary of balancing the requirements of security against those of military, administrative, and industrial efficiency was to reassert itself at later stages of the Civil War. So, on 17 December 1919, soon after the triple thrusts of Denikin in the south, Iudenich in the west, and Kolchak in the east had been repelled, but while the Civil War was still being hotly waged, Dzerzhinsky addressed an order to all Chekas, opening on a note of criticism: 'Dear Comrades! There are three issues on which nearly all Chekists are at fault and which it is

therefore vital to clarify, namely: hostages, specialists and detainees in general.'

Dzerzhinsky went on to admonish Cheka workers for lack of discrimination in making arrests, and counselled them to apply certain criteria of expediency so as to ensure that arrests of specialists promoted rather than prejudiced the Soviet cause. Chekas were instructed to compile records—for submission to Vecheka headquarters—of all bourgeois elements such as might serve as hostages, e.g. former merchants, ex-officers, ex-Tsarist officials, important relatives of the enemy, etc. Vecheka authorisation was required for the actual arrest of hostages. Specialists might be arrested only if their involvement in counter-revolutionary activity, in speculation, or in sabotage had been established beyond doubt; the commissar of their employing institution should be notified in advance of, or immediately after, an arrest.[130] The implementation of the above instruction was facilitated by an earlier Sovnarkom decree of 23 September 1919, requiring the registration of former landowners, capitalists, and persons who held responsible posts under the Tsarist and bourgeois régimes, in order to establish whether these former 'exploiters of the people' were now using their professional qualifications in the service of the labouring masses, as was the case with 'the overwhelming majority of military specialists'; this registration was to be effected by the NKVD.[131]

However, the Chekas proved obdurate, for, on 28 February 1920, Dzerzhinsky sternly warned all Provincial Chekas and Area Transport Chekas that complaints were daily reaching the Vecheka Presidium concerning failure to adhere to the decree of 14 December 1918 requiring Chekas to give advance notice of intent to arrest key personnel; such failure rendered impossible the speedy replacement of the personnel, thereby creating chaos. Dzerzhinsky questioned the need for so many arrests, and warned Provincial Cheka chairmen and collegium members that non-observance of state decrees—which would be mercilessly punished—might turn them into enemies of the Soviet state. Senior Chekists must be familiar with state decrees and Cheka orders, copies of which should be prominently displayed in Cheka offices.[132]

Dzerzhinsky's strictures were inspired solely by considerations of expediency, not by ethical principles, and the Soviet régime continued to use hostages as a lever in the confrontation of terror, applying this pressure both to counter-revolutionaries on the right and, on the left, to Anarchists and the semi-legal socialist opposition parties. In an article on 'Hostages' in the *Encyclopedia of State and Law*, published

in 1925 under the editorship of P. I. Stuchka—then Chairman of the Supreme Court of the RSFSR—the history of hostage-taking is traced back to antiquity, and its application in time of class- and civil-war is mentioned approvingly, with the Paris Commune as precedent. The article concludes: 'in our Civil War against the bourgeoisie and landowners the institution of hostage-taking was applied as an extreme and extraordinary measure for fighting the class enemy, and as one of the forms of the Red Terror'.[133] However, the hostage system outlasted the Civil War period and became a recognised political police technique for exerting pressure, e.g. on Soviet citizens going abroad. And so the emergency expedients of the Red Terror and War Communism tended to become perpetuated in the subsequent practices of the Soviet state—which, far from withering away, grew in substance.

DZERZHINSKY, AS NKVD PEOPLE'S COMMISSAR, IMPOSES VECHEKA-NKVD CO-ORDINATION

By Party Central Committee and Sovnarkom decision of 16 March 1919,[134] endorsed by VTsIK on 30 March,[135] Dzerzhinsky succeeded Petrovskii (who became Chairman of the VTsIK in the Ukraine) as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the RSFSR, combining that office with continued direction of the Vecheka; the two organisations remained separate, with M. F. Vladimirskii still serving as People's Deputy Commissar for Internal Affairs.[136] Dzerzhinsky's new appointment was designed to heal the breach between the Vecheka and the NKVD, and to co-ordinate the efforts of these two departments against the menace of renewed counter-revolution, signalled by a series of peasant risings in various parts of Soviet territory.[137] By this appointment Dzerzhinsky, already a member of the Party's Central Committee and of the VTsIK Presidium, and indisputably one of Lenin's closest and most trusted lieutenants, now joined the Sovnarkom, the inner cabinet of the Soviet Government, thereby gaining in prestige, influence, and administrative power. (In practice, Dzerzhinsky—or one of his Vecheka stand-ins—had previously been entitled to attend Sovnarkom meetings, as one of a number of accredited representatives of several central agencies, invested with voting membership of the Sovnarkom.)[138]

At one stroke the feud between the NKVD and the Vecheka was settled in favour of the latter. Under Dzerzhinsky's protective wing, the Vecheka consolidated its position in the state structure: its territorial organs, freed from the threat of becoming mere administrative appendages of the Soviets (to which they remained nominally

attached), were confirmed in their dependence solely upon the Vecheka. With Dzerzhinsky as NKVD suzerain, the interests of the Chekas were safeguarded. Writing in April in the NKVD's own periodical, *Power of the Soviets*, Latsis warned that the abolition of the District Chekas, which had encouraged a resurgence of counter-revolutionary activity, by no means signified a softening of repression against such activity—as far too many people took to be the case. Latsis urged:

> An end must be put to this, and as soon as possible. It must be shown in the provinces that repression against counter-revolutionaries has not diminished, that the heavy punishing hand of revolution will descend on every counter-revolutionary as mercilessly and weightily as before. Swift and severe measures will not only prevent unnecessary troubles, but will also lessen the number of victims on both sides. The history of our Civil War teaches us this lesson. ... Yes, the District Chekas have been abolished, but the Civil War goes on. Consequently the laws of Civil War must remain in force. ... The Provincial Chekas must have their feelers out in the localities. With the disappearance of their subordinate organs, the work of the Provincial Chekas increases many times over. It is vital to perceive this in good time. It is absolutely useless for Party members and district executive committees to refuse to allocate former District Cheka workers to the Provincial Chekas. The latter's personnel must be increased. Therefore give them experienced Party workers, so that they are not forced to recruit just anyone to hand, and thus you will avoid your own future complaints about their acts of lawlessness and terror.[139]

The abolition of the District Chekas also placed a heavy burden on District Militias. By a VTsIK decree of 3 April 1919[140] the Militia was militarised, thereby improving its level of training and discipline. The Chief Administration of Militia was made responsible for issuing militiamen with pay, uniforms, arms, and rations on a parity with Red Army men behind the fighting front. The material needs and morale of the Militia were thus attended to. The price paid by the Militia was the continuous mobilisation of one-third of its manpower for service in the Red Army.[141]

In the past, the spheres of competence of Militia and Chekas had overlapped considerably, in that both were assigned the function of maintaining law and order, and of enforcing government decrees and regulations. From the start the Vecheka faced the problem of combating crime; on 31 January 1918, Lenin had directed it to form a separate department for that purpose.[142] In Moscow, the Vecheka and M-Cheka had been in the forefront of a sustained campaign against banditry.[143] Whilst centrally, in Moscow, the Vecheka was able to co-operate smoothly with the metropolitan Militia and the city's

criminal investigation administration, similar harmony had been harder to achieve in the provinces, owing to the perennial conflict between Chekas and Soviets. Now, under Dzerzhinsky's combined management of Vecheka and NKVD, the thorny problem of co-ordination between Chekas and Militias could be resolved. It was tackled by the Third All-Russian Conference of Chekas, which met in Moscow on 1–3 June 1919 and passed a resolution prescribing that Cheka representatives should sit on the collegia of departments of administration of local Soviets, and that—providing they were experienced Party members—heads of Militias at provincial and district level should sit on the collegia of Provincial Chekas and—'where such exist'—of District Chekas. If Militias lacked reliable leaders, these should be provided out of Cheka personnel, especially to serve as chiefs of criminal investigation sections, which should be staffed by as many experienced Chekists as possible,[144] and should be reorganised so as to absorb into their competence part of the functions—hitherto reserved for the Chekas—of combating speculation and misconduct by officials. Similarly, the local Cheka Transport Departments should co-opt onto their collegia the heads of Railway Militia Departments at provincial, district and section level.[145] This Vecheka resolution was endorsed on 4 June by the NKVD Collegium[146] and was circulated to Soviets over Dzerzhinsky's signature as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs.[147]

The September issue of *Power of the Soviets*, obviously engaging in a public relations exercise on behalf of the Chekas, informed the Soviets that, despite all the Chekas' admitted failings (which were largely excused on the score of overwork, as demonstrated by a statistical survey of the impressive results recently achieved by the slender staff of the Moscow Cheka), 'of all the administrative organs of the Soviet Government, the greatest services to the cause of the proletariat and of socialism had been rendered by the Vecheka'. More than that: 'It can be said that the work of the Chekas saved the Revolution.'[148]

Under Dzerzhinsky's overall direction, the relationship of local Chekas to Soviets was no longer in dispute when, on 12 December 1919, *Izvestia* published, as a decree,[149] the resolution of the Seventh Congress of Soviets: 'Concerning the organisation of Soviets'. Under its terms, provincial Soviet executive committees comprised fifteen departments, including the Provincial Cheka as department No. 14. There was no longer any question of Chekas being subordinated, as a sub-department, to the department of local administration within a Soviet's executive commitee. And despite the Chekas' theoretical

status as departments of provincial Soviets, Dzerzhinsky, firmly controlling both Soviets and Chekas, saw to it that the latter should operate parallel to the former, as an independent apparatus of repression.

Soon after taking over the NKVD, Dzerzhinsky set about effecting the co-ordination, and even the partial integration, of its machinery with corresponding Vecheka departments. On 11 June 1919, he outlined the impending changes: the administrative and finance departments, as also the secretariats, of NKVD and Vecheka were to combine into single units;[150] the work of the NKVD's Central Collegium for Prisoners of War and Refugees *(Tsentroplenbezh)*[151] was to be organised in conjunction with that of the NKVD Department for Forced Labour[152] (forerunner of Stalin's notorious GULAG[153] system), and of the Vecheka's Special Department (OO) for security in the armed forces; the three departments were to be located close to one another.[154]

Tsentroplenbezh had been established on 23 April 1918, by Sovnarkom decree,[155] under the Commissariat for War; it inherited from the NKVD the department for refugees, whose director, I. S. Unshlikht, an NKVD Collegium member, took charge of *Tsentroplenbezh*. It was a sizeable enterprise: after the October Revolution there were 4 million refugees[156] besides 2,200,000 prisoners of war from the Central Powers[157] on Soviet soil. On 24 May 1919, *Tsentroplenbezh* was transferred from the War Commissariat into the competence of the NKVD.[158]

Dzerzhinsky's inter-departmental co-ordination took shape. By January 1920, the NKVD, which, since the government's move to Moscow, had been located successively in the Lux Hotel and in Nastasinskii Pereulok No. 3,[159] was already ensconced, along with the Vecheka's Special Department (OO), at Bolshaia Lubianka No. 2, close to Vecheka headquarters at No. 11[160] (in December 1920, in consequence of another reorganisation, Vecheka HQ would itself transfer from Bolshaia Lubianka No. 11 to No. 2). The NKVD's Department for Forced Labour and *Tsentroplenbezh*, headed respectively by Eiduk and Kedrov (both of whom sat simultaneously on the Collegium of the NKVD and that of the Vecheka), were sited side by side at Nos. 45 and 43 Bolshaia Nikitskaia Street.[161] The financial departments of the NKVD and Vecheka had merged.[162]

THE VECHEKA'S FREEDOM FROM EXTERNAL CONTROLS

Constitutional abuses perpetrated in the name of necessity were bitterly criticised by the Menshevik leader, Martov, at the Seventh

Congress of Soviets, which met in Moscow on 5–9 December 1919. The political composition of the Congress spoke for itself: out of 922 voting delegates, 883 were Bolsheviks, 34 non-party, and the remaining 5 represented different hues of Communism. Of the 387 non-voting delegates, 330 were Bolsheviks, 27 non-party, and the remaining 30 a heterogeneous collection of Communists and socialists, including the odd SR and Menshevik.

Whilst the Congress was demonstrably monopolised by the Bolsheviks, 'opposition' speakers were allowed their largely symbolic say. Martov used his opportunity to point out that, contrary to the constitution—which required that Congresses should be held at six-monthly intervals—neither the Congress of Soviets nor its Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) had met over the past twelvemonth, leaving all decrees to be enacted by the Sovnarkom, by the VTsIK Presidium, or else by other government agencies not authorised to do so. Similarly, local Soviets met rarely, and decisions were taken in their name by their executive committees, which were seldom exposed to election. Furthermore, non-Communists had been forced out of most Soviets, so that the latter had become in effect organisational extensions of the Communist Party. This situation had induced apathy and paralysis of civic conscience in the masses, conditioned by centuries of serfdom under the Tsars, and ready to off-load responsibility for their fate on to the shoulders of government. This bureaucratic and hypocritical degeneration of authority had made possible the emergence of a state within the state, by the transformation of organs of repression and police supervision, bred by the Civil War, into an autonomous and omnipresent force. During the preceding year the apparatus of the Extraordinary Commissions, originally envisaged as a temporary expedient, had grown to a gigantic size. After a series of attempts to confine this apparatus within strictly defined limits, by subordinating it to the control of revolutionary courts and of the Soviets, the authorities had completely capitulated to the Chekas, leaving in their hands the life, liberty, and honour of their citizens. The monstrous growth of terror, the abolition of any semblance of legality, and the terrible ascendancy of arbitrary rule had been the consequence of such a policy, as had the steeping of wide masses of the population in hatred, a condition which represented a greater danger to the Revolution than did the conspiracies which the Chekas were combating. Martov concluded his peroration with an appeal that civil rights be safeguarded in accordance with a democratised Soviet constitution,[163] at which Lenin leapt to the defence of the Chekas, seizing the opportunity to ridicule

the Mensheviks (whom he described as 'bourgeois democrats') and the SRs. He roundly declared that both terror and the Chekas were 'absolutely indispensable'; the Chekas were 'splendidly organised'.[164]

A People's Commissariat for State Control,[165] known familiarly as *Goskontrol*, had existed in theory ever since its establishment by decree[166] a few weeks after the October *coup;* a further decree in March 1918 elaborated its competence.[167] However, the Commissariat only began to function as an effective department of state after its concrete corner-stone had been laid by a joint Sovnarkom-VTsIK decree of 12 April 1919,[168] with Stalin as its Commissar. In early 1920, another VTsIK decree[169] transformed *Goskontrol* into the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection—generally known as *Rabkrin* or RKI—still under Stalin. The purpose of this institution was to exercise close supervision over all Commissariats and agencies of Soviet administration in order to check corruption, eliminate bureaucratic delay and wastage, and to simplify and improve the practical functioning of the machinery of state.[170]

It might be supposed that, second only to the NKIu, *Goskontrol/ Rabkrin* would be the most appropriate department for inspecting the Vecheka. A list, dated 1920, of *Goskontrol* departments embraced the whole spectrum of state administration, *Goskontrol* department No. 6 being responsible for inspection of VTsIK, Sovnarkom, NKVD, NKID, and NKIu, but the list made no mention of the Vecheka.[171] In late 1921, *Rabkrin*, although somewhat reduced in size since the preceding year, amounted to a huge apparatus of over 900 agencies, employing 1,878 personnel in its central organisation alone.[172]

The only evidence found of *Rabkrin* intervention in the affairs of the Vecheka is a report of April 1920 concerning a *Rabkrin* inspection of 38 places of detention in Moscow, including 5 prisons and 7 forced labour camps; of the 293 persons participating in the inspection, 53 represented the Vecheka and M-Cheka. Having inquired into the cases of 7,312 prisoners (of whom 3,147, or 43 per cent had been committed by the Vecheka and its agencies), the *Rabkrin* commission recommended that 3,074 prisoners (42 per cent of the total) could be released without danger to the state. However, no action was to be taken on this recommendation until other commissions had reprocessed all the cases. For review of the 3,147 cases committed by the Chekas, a commission was to be formed, attached to the Vecheka, and composed of representatives of the Vecheka, the M-Cheka, *Rabkrin*, and NKIu.[173] This commission, in which Chekists would have a very significant say, could hardly be described as an impartial outside body.

Clearly *Rabkrin* had no mandate to inspect the Vecheka. After the abortive attempts of late 1918 and early 1919 to impose state supervision over the Vecheka, the latter was left largely to its own devices and, in some degree, to Party tutelage. Symptomatic of the Vecheka's independence of external controls was the regulation, issued around 1 February 1919, establishing three-man supervision and inspection commissions *(kontrolno-revizionnye komissii)*, attached to the Vecheka and to Provincial Chekas; their purpose was to check on the functioning of Chekist personnel and organisations, and to investigate complaints of malpractices.[174] These were internal boards, composed exclusively of Chekists (of not less than two years Party standing), and accountable solely to the Vecheka. This palpably incestuous supervisory arrangement presumably emerged for lack of an acceptable external control system, and it may have replaced the three-man supervisory collegia *(kontrolnye kollegii)* composed of representatives of the local Cheka, Party organisation, and Soviet executive committee, prescribed by the Vecheka instruction of 1 December 1918. The question: *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* had been answered; the guardians were to be guarded by none save themselves.

Chapter VIII

The Party, Lenin, and the Vecheka

> Not a single important political or organisational question is decided by any state agency in our republic without direction from the Party's Central Committee.
>
> Lenin (5), Vol. XLI, pp. 30-1

> A good Communist is at the same time a good Chekist.
>
> Lenin, 3 April 1920
> *Protokoly, IX sezd RKP(b)*, p. 398

Formally, the Vecheka had been established by, and stood attached to, the Council of People's Commissars, but there is no indication of the existence of any special Sovnarkom machinery for control over it. In reality the Vecheka was controlled by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which openly acknowledged, in its *Izvestia* letter of 8 February 1919, that 'the Chekas were founded, exist and work solely as the direct organs of the Party, under its direction and supervision'. Certainly Dzerzhinsky regarded the Vecheka as being essentially at the Party's disposal; he constantly stressed: 'The Cheka must be the organ of the Central Committee, otherwise it will do harm, and will degenerate into an Okhranka or a tool of counter-revolution.'[1] Here again, initially there existed no special Central Committee machinery for running the Vecheka. Such machinery became available when the Eighth Party Congress (18–23 March 1919) established two sub-committees of the Central Committee: its Political Bureau (Politburo) and Organisational Bureau (Orgburo), with Stalin as member of both Bureaux.[2] The general principle of this arrangement was, as defined by Lenin: 'The Orgburo allocates forces, while the Politburo decides policy.'[3]

In point of fact, from the very beginning Dzerzhinsky himself constituted the Vecheka's direct link with the Central Committee, of which he was a member continuously from 1917 until his death. He also became a candidate-member of the Orgburo on 5 April 1920,[4] and a full member of it in April 1922.[5] He had constant dealings with Lenin, who personally superintended the political police in his dual capacity as Sovnarkom Chairman and as Party leader.

The Sovnarkom was theoretically responsible for appointing the

Vecheka's Chairman and its Collegium members, but it is clear from Dzerzhinsky's letter of guidance to his deputy, Ksenofontov, written on 23 July 1920 shortly before Dzerzhinsky's departure for the Polish front,[6] that such appointments were discreetly decided in advance by the Party's Central Committee, subsequent Sovnarkom assent being a routine formality. For instance, on 27 March 1919 the Sovnarkom approved the Vecheka Collegium's membership composition,[7] but this had in fact been settled by Central Committee decision two days earlier.[8] Dzerzhinsky's letter of guidance to his deputy illustrates the Vecheka's working relationship with state and Party: Dzerzhinsky advised that Vecheka projects requiring governmental approval should be presented to the Sovnarkom, to VTsIK, or to the Defence Council by Avanesov, who was obviously well qualified for that role by his experience as secretary and Presidium member of VTsIK. Menzhinsky, who had held senior governmental posts, and who, in his new capacity as head of the Vecheka's Special Department (OO), would have regular dealings with the Orgburo, was delegated by Dzerzhinsky to maintain contact with the Central Committee on political issues, keeping it informed about notable developments of political, economic, or Party significance.[9] Dzerzhinsky simultaneously instructed the All-Ukrainian Cheka: 'It is essential that you should keep Lenin and the Central Committee systematically informed about anything of major importance.'[10]

Many of the Central Committee's important behind-the-scenes interventions in Vecheka affairs have come to light. As previously described, the Central Committee launched the Vecheka statute which was enacted by VTsIK on 28 October 1918; it also created, on 25 October, a commission for the political supervision of the Vecheka, which commission was publicly established later the same day by VTsIK, ostensibly as its own agency. On 4 February 1919, the Central Committee appointed a commission to work out a statute for reform and restriction of the Vecheka; VTsIK passed this statute on 17 February. When, in late 1918, the Moscow Cheka was re-established, with Dzerzhinsky as its immediate chief, this was by order of the Party's Central Committee,[11] which also took decisions, on 16 September 1918, regarding the status and reinforcement of the Petrograd Cheka.[12] Similarly, it was the Central Committee—whose boundless confidence the indispensable Dzerzhinsky clearly enjoyed—which decided his assignment, in March 1919, to head the NKVD,[13] and which was responsible for putting him, on 18 August 1919, in direct charge of the Vecheka's increasingly important Special Department (OO),[14] commanded previously by Kedrov and later by

Menzhinsky. It was the Politburo which, on 26 April 1920, instructed Dzerzhinsky to proceed immediately to the Ukraine in response to the Polish incursion.[15] Very many other such examples of Party decisions regarding the Vecheka could be quoted.

Apart from control of the Vecheka from the top, the Party *apparat* also exercised a measure of supervision at local level, for instance through Party representatives on the three-man supervisory collegia (which may, however, have been superseded by the supervision and inspection commissions, introduced *circa* 1 February 1919, and wholly staffed by Chekists), even if these had no right to interfere in the Chekas' work. A Vecheka directive of 30 May 1920 emphasised that local Chekas should be guided by Party organisations.[16]

A determined effort was continuously applied, not least by Dzerzhinsky, towards staffing the Chekas with trusted Party members, so as to ensure the political integrity of Chekists and their disciplined obedience to the Party's will. The Vecheka was constantly appealing for reinforcement of the Chekas by Party personnel,[17] and the Party responded generously, though there was some grumbling about the Chekas' insatiable appetite for the best Bolsheviks.[18] On 24 December 1919, the Central Committee issued a directive to all provincial and district party organisations, asking them to post the maximum number of dependable Party members to the Chekas.[19] Another such instruction was circulated on 4 April 1921, calling for redoubled vigilance in the context of the New Economic Policy: the Orgburo had decided, on 17 March, to restore to the Chekas such ex-Chekists as could be spared by the Party, and the closest co-operation was urged between local Chekas and corresponding Party Committees.[20]

It was Bolshevik policy, from the very first, to place Party members in positions of responsibility in the Chekas. Party members only (this included LSRs) were supposed to attend the First Conference of Chekas in mid-June 1918,[21] though in the event three non-party delegates were admitted.[22] In late August 1918, the Vecheka claimed that the Chekas (i.e. Cheka collegia) consisted almost exclusively of Party members,[23] but only a few weeks later, with the Red Terror in full spate, the Vecheka complained of a serious lack of Party personnel for its needs.[24] In September 1918, a census covering a considerable number of District Chekas confirmed that most of their collegia were composed entirely of Communists, and only a few were diluted by an element of sympathisers, some residual LSRs, and the occasional Anarchist-Syndicalist.[25] The Instruction to Local Chekas, issued on 1 December 1918, laid down

that their collegia should consist wholly of Party members;[26] the Defence Council Commission on the Vecheka, at its meeting on 3 December 1918, specified that top posts in the Chekas should be held by Party members of not less than two years standing.[27]

A revealing Central Committee directive was issued on 24 December 1919 to all provincial and district Party Committees; it contended that Party organisations were unwilling to post their members to the Chekas because the work there was narrow and isolated, so that Chekists lost touch with the Party and could only be reclaimed by it upon leaving the Chekas. A dearth of Communists in the Chekas had resulted. The Central Committee urged that Party members should only be recalled from the Chekas with the latter's consent, and must be replaced by Party members of equal worth; personnel turnover should be slow but systematic.[28] That same month Dzerzhinsky appealed to the Central Committee (which promptly responded) to make available 200 Party members for attendance of Cheka training courses of two months duration; these courses commenced in February 1920, and turned out hundreds of Communists for service in the Chekas.[29] Overall statistics of Party membership within the Chekas are not available, but we have Dzerzhinsky's proud claim in February 1920:

> Our Cheka is the best, the sharpest, and the most effective weapon of the workers' dictatorship. Nowhere else, in no other institution, is there as high a proportion of Communist workers as in ours. According to our information, almost 50% of our personnel are Communists, who fill virtually all posts of responsibility. And that is why, in current conditions, the whole weight of the struggle should be borne by us as being the representatives of the will and dictatorship of the working class.[30]

The Ukrainian Cheka claimed, in mid-June 1919, to have a three times higher proportion of Communists among its personnel than did other organisations.[31] In late 1920, some 2,000 of its 5,220 personnel were Party members, i.e. almost 40 per cent of the total;[32] by the end of 1921, the Ukrainian Cheka's level of Party membership had risen to 70 per cent,[33] an extraordinarily high proportion. The Communist Party must therefore bear particular responsibility for the reputation of extreme cruelty which the Ukrainian Cheka earned itself.

In Latsis's view, the first principle necessary for successful operation of the Chekas was that Chekists should be Party members; next, their personal integrity must be above reproach; and as his third principle he stipulated a regular rotation of Communists in and out of the Chekas, lest they become corrupted by the demoralising conditions of Cheka service; he wrote:

However honourable the man, and however crystal-pure his heart, work in the Extraordinary Commissions, vested as it is with almost unlimited power and conducted in conditions deeply affecting the nervous system, leaves its mark. Only exceptional Chekists remain uninfluenced by these conditions. Consequently the local Party Committee, which is essentially responsible for the personnel and the work of Extraordinary Commissions, must bear in mind that the effectiveness of the latter depends on the opportunities given to Cheka staff to renew themselves in other occupations, and on the availability to the Chekas of steadfast, resilient and upright personnel.[34]

This was echoed by Bukharin: 'Do not let us forget how many of them [Chekists] who remain are nervous wrecks, and sometimes hopelessly ill. For their work was such torture, demanding such enormous concentration, it was so hellish, that it called for a truly iron character.'[35] Bukharin was in a position to judge, for he, in a Politburo capacity, became exceptionally closely involved with the Cheka. The Politburo was used by the Party to supervise the Vecheka; as Trotsky put it: 'The Cheka was headed by Dzerzhinsky, a man of high moral purpose. He was subordinated to the Politburo, whose members had their own individual views on all issues, and knew how to uphold them.'[36] The Politburo, founded at the Eighth Party Congress in March 1919, consisted of five full members—Lenin, Kamenev, Trotsky, Stalin, and Krestinskii (the last named being replaced in March 1921 by Zinoviev)—and three candidate-members-initially Zinoviev, Bukharin, and Kalinin. Bukharin was eventually promoted to full member status in June 1924, after the Thirteenth Party Congress.[37] Most of these Politburo incumbents (Krestinskii and Kalinin excepted) were major political figures with strong, distinctive personalities and with identifiable attitudes towards the Vecheka.

In 1936, Boris Nicolaevsky learned from Bukharin, then on a visit to Western Europe, that when, as a result of the bitter Cheka controversy which raged in 1918/1919, Lenin rejected the proposal made by an influential group in the Sovnarkom (or more probably in VTsIK) to abolish the Vecheka altogether and to transfer its functions to a reorganised Commissariat for Justice, he (Lenin) decided instead to subordinate it direct to the Politburo, whose official representative should sit in the Vecheka Collegium with the right of veto, an arrangement that received no publicity.[38] Bukharin, who had been campaigning for restriction of the Vecheka's power to execute its prisoners, was nominated for this duty. Lenin commented: 'Let him go there himself, and let him try to keep the terror within limits, if it is possible. We shall all be very glad if he succeeds.'[39]

Bukharin's attachment to the Vecheka Collegium lasted until 1920,

when he could stand it no longer; meanwhile, he used his veto to save a number of individuals from execution, including the Menshevik, V. N. Rozanov.[40] That Bukharin ultimately developed an appreciative and even a warm regard for Dzerzhinsky and the Vecheka, emerges from the eulogies penned by him on the fifth anniversary of Dzerzhinsky's death.[41] Indeed Robert Conquest comments that Bukharin's 'enthusiasm for the terror machine was always extravagant' and cites, by way of example, his *Pravda* article on the tenth anniversary of the Cheka's foundation.[42] To Bukharin, as to other Bolshevik leaders, even the most arbitrary and oppressive conduct of the political police was acceptable in the last resort, so long as it was seen to be an indispensable means for the preservation of the Revolution and of its guardian—the Bolshevik Party.[43] Shortly before his own execution, in 1938, Bukharin wistfully recalled the political police of Dzerzhinsky's day: 'Dzerzhinsky is gone; the remarkable traditions of the Cheka have gradually faded into the past, when the revolutionary idea guided all its actions, justified cruelty to enemies, guarded the state against any kind of counter-revolution. That is how the Cheka earned special confidence, special regard, authority and esteem.'[44]

Another prominent, and a more consistent, Party critic of the Vecheka was Lev Kamenev, veteran Bolshevik who was omitted from the Central Committee between the Seventh (March 1918) and the Eighth (March 1919) Party Congresses, probably because of his long involuntary absence abroad,[45] but who entered the Politburo upon its formation. Lenin relied on him, on various occasions, to intervene in Vecheka affairs, appointing him to sit on commissions as a counter-weight to Dzerzhinsky. Kamenev appears to have acted from the first as an advocate of moderation; at the Sixth Congress of Soviets, on 6 November 1918, he moved a resolution proposing the release of all hostages other than those whose detention the Vecheka considered to be essential.[46] As we have seen, on 25 October 1918 the Central Committee (and later the same day, VTsIK) appointed him, together with Stalin and Kurskii, as members of a short-lived commission for political control of the Vecheka (it may have developed into the equally ephemeral Party-state Supervision and Inspection Commission attached to the Vecheka, formed on 2 November). It was Kamenev who, probably on behalf of the VTsIK Presidium, on 8 January 1919 submitted to Lenin the draft resolution proposing abolition of the Vecheka and all its organs; subsequently, on 4 February, Kamenev, along with Stalin and Dzerzhinsky, was appointed by the Party's Central Committee to a three-man commission which worked out the

decree of 17 February, under whose terms the Cheka system, whilst by no means abolished (although already shorn of its District Chekas) did nevertheless temporarily yield its punitive powers to the reorganised Revolutionary Tribunals. It was Kamenev again who, together with Dzerzhinsky and Bukharin, was deputed by the Politburo on 11 September 1919 to review the cases of detained members of the bourgeois intelligentsia 'of the Kadet type', many of whom had clearly been arrested unnecessarily.[47] Two years later, Kamenev, at Lenin's bidding, would play a significant part in the preparation of the statute whereby, in early February 1922, a 'reformed' Vecheka was turned into the GPU.

The Vecheka's critics in the Politburo, Bukharin and Kamenev, were outnumbered by the hard advocates of terror: Trotsky, Stalin, Zinoviev, and of course the ruthless pragmatist Lenin. There was no sense of rivalry between Trotsky and Dzerzhinsky, such as might understandably have arisen between the head of the armed forces and the director of the political police. Despite the occasional conflict of departmental interests, notably over the subordination of the Cheka Special Departments (OOs), which was settled by a compromise, and over the role of VOKhR, Dzerzhinsky and Trotsky both had the common cause too much at heart, and were too devoid of personal ambition, for rivalry to enter into their relationship. Trotsky never criticised the political police as an institution,[48] not even after the OGPU had executed, in 1929, his secret partisan, Bliumkin, himself an OGPU officer. In May 1930, Trotsky wrote, or authorised to be written, in an unsigned article in his émigré periodical, *Biulleten oppozitsii*:

> The GPU is an organ of self-defence of the proletarian dictatorship. In so far as the October Revolution, after thirteen years, is still encircled by a hostile world, it cannot renounce such organs—the dictatorship cannot cease to be a dictatorship. Only liberals, and liberalising Social-Democrats can put the question on a formal basis. We put the question on a class basis: *in whose name* is repression being applied? *Who and what* is being served? It is a matter of revolutionary expediency, and not of a supra-class justice.'[49]

Himself a hard-liner, imposing a pitiless discipline in the Red Army (executing the commander and commissar, and shooting every tenth soldier, of a regiment which had turned tail in face of the enemy),[50] Trotsky both practised and preached the necessity of the Red Terror, and wrote a pamphlet justifying it.[51] He remained unrepentant over the Communist régime's savage suppression of the Kronstadt rebels who had defied his ultimatum of 5 March 1921; long after the event, he continued to maintain that the mutiny had been

essentially bourgeois in character and consequently counter-revolutionary.[52]

Stalin, too, was a hard-liner on terror, and no critic of the Vecheka. As already noted, he served on a couple of short-lived commissions on the Vecheka, created by the Party's Central Committee. Moreover, he several times found himself in Dzerzhinsky's company on special Party assignments. Thus these two were appointed by the Central Committee and the Defence Council as members of an investigation commission directed to inquire into the causes of the surrender of Perm:[53] on 3 January 1919, they left for the eastern front, and carried out a drastic purge of local Soviet and Party institutions, not exempting the Chekas.[54] In late January, on its return journey from Viatka to Moscow, the commission stopped to study evidence produced by M. I. Lebedev, chairman of the Iaroslavl Provincial Cheka, pointing to treachery and an impending revolt on the part of senior Red Army officers (mainly 'military specialists' of the *ancien régime*), including the chief of staff of the Iaroslavl Military District; Dzerzhinsky and Stalin there and then signed an order—which was carried out the same day (27 January)—authorising the execution of the officers concerned. This high-handed Vecheka action did not please Trotsky.[55] Shortly after its return to Moscow, the commission submitted a report which was highly critical of the Soviet High Command and of the Third Red Army.[56] This report constituted an early salvo in Stalin's vicious campaign of denigration of Trotsky.

Dzerzhinsky and Stalin were again brought together following the arrangement, made on 3 May 1919 by the Orgburo, on Dzerzhinsky's proposal, whereby the Vecheka Special Department (OO) (which Dzerzhinsky personally headed from 18 August 1919 to 20 July 1920) should render a weekly report to the Orgburo, either direct or via Stalin.[57] The Orgburo, which became a preserve of Stalin's, was the agency which arranged for Party personnel to be posted to, or away from, the Chekas. On 5 April 1920, at the Ninth Party Congress, Dzerzhinsky was himself elected a candidate-member of the Orgburo,[58] which circumstance further promoted the Central Committee's close rapport with the Vecheka, and Stalin's with Dzerzhinsky. Most important of all, it was Stalin who in 1920 succeeded Bukharin as the Politburo's representative on the Vecheka Collegium.[59]

Stalin scored over Trotsky in mid-1919 in securing the replacement of the Commander-in-Chief, Vatsetis, by his own nominee, S. S. Kamenev. This led Trotsky to submit his resignation as Commissar

for War, but it was not accepted. Several days later, on 8 July 1919, Trotsky, then at the southern front, received a telegram signed by Dzerzhinsky, Krestinskii (Secretary of the Party's Central Committee), Lenin, and his own deputy, Sklianskii, informing him that Vatsetis had been arrested because of his implication in a conspiracy. (He was soon released, so there could not have been any substance to the charge of treason.) Trotsky saw in this the hand of Stalin. Later he wrote: 'Stalin had a score of old slights to settle with Vatsetis. Moreover he derived a sense of impunity and safety from the friendly influence he exerted over the head of the Cheka. ... One was conscious of the obvious intrigue behind this episode, and of the invisible presence of Stalin behind Dzerzhinsky.'[60]

The friction between Stalin and Trotsky may have had its origin in the jealousy felt by the Old Bolshevik, Stalin, towards the brilliant new Leninist convert, Trotsky, who performed with such triumphant virtuosity the central role on the stage of the October *coup d'état*—that all-important event in which Stalin was conspicuous by his absence.[61] It fell to the Chekist, Menzhinsky, to fan Trotsky's distrust of Stalin. In late 1919, or maybe in 1920, Menzhinsky, who was then serving in the Vecheka's Special Department (OO), presented a report to Trotsky in his train on one of the Civil War fronts. The report completed, Menzhinsky, shuffling and stammering in embarrassment, ingratiatingly warned Trotsky that Stalin was conducting an intrigue against him; Menzhinsky said of Stalin: 'Yes, he is insinuating to Lenin and to some others that you are grouping men about you who are especially hostile to Lenin.' Whereupon Trotsky disdainfully showed the door to Menzhinsky, turning him into an enemy for life and into a supporter of Stalin, 'a true shadow of Stalin in the GPU'. Meanwhile, Menzhinsky's warning took effect, and, despite Lenin's reassurances, Trotsky's suspicions of Stalin deepened.[62]

Of the Bolshevik leaders, Lenin alone kept a firm and continuous grip on the Vecheka; he had presided over its foundation, he defended its existence, he regulated its powers, he apportioned praise and, occasionally, blame, he inquired minutely into its investigation of individuals, and monitored its activities. Lenin's control over the political police was exercised through his constant contact with Dzerzhinsky. During the early years of the Bolshevik regime, Lenin's closest and most trusted collaborators were Iakov Sverdlov and Felix Dzerzhinsky, two infinitely industrious, capable, selfless, dedicated disciples, whose loyalty and implicit obedience to Lenin and to the Party he personified could be relied upon absolutely. Sverdlov, until

his untimely death in March 1919, functioned as the Party's indispensable organising secretary and as Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, i.e. as the nominal head of state; Dzerzhinsky, besides being Chairman of the Cheka, discharged various other responsibilities entrusted to him from time to time by Lenin and by the Party. We have it from Malkov, Commandant of the Kremlin, that only Sverdlov and Dzerzhinsky enjoyed unlimited access to Lenin; they alone had the privilege of entering Lenin's work room via a tiny door situated behind Lenin's desk, a door communicating with a small well-guarded room containing the Kremlin's internal top-level telephone switchboard. All other mortals came, by appointment, through an antechamber tenanted by Lenin's secretarial staff, or through a third door at which sentries carefully checked all callers' credentials.[63]

Lenin took an intense personal interest in the work of the Vecheka. Despite his many pressing preoccupations, he found time to visit Vecheka headquarters, where he would stay closeted in Dzerzhinsky's office, giving his attention to current problems.[64] Dzerzhinsky kept Lenin closely informed regarding Vecheka affairs,[65] as also did Unshlikht, who deputised for Dzerzhinsky from April 1921.[66] Very conveniently, Lenin could take vital decisions affecting the Vecheka in his capacity as undisputed Party leader, and could then see to their practical implementation in his other capacity, as Chairman of the Sovnarkom, to which the Vecheka was formally subordinated.

In shaping and directing the political police, Lenin and Dzerzhinsky complemented each other. Dzerzhinsky was admirably fitted for Chekist work; not for nothing had he spent twenty years as an operational revolutionary, mostly in the underground, engaged in a battle of wits with the pursuing Okhrana, living under false identities, organising a clandestine party, spending many years in prison and Siberian exile, and perpetually escaping in order to resume his struggle against Tsarist authority. He emerged a hardened, battle-scarred revolutionary veteran; this practical education, this accumulated experience, had prepared him for leadership of the Vecheka.

Lenin, by contrast, had been virtually an armchair revolutionary; after a spell in a St. Petersburg prison (December 1895 to early 1897), followed by three years (May 1897 to February 1900) spent in the relative ease and tranquillity of Siberian exile—where he was able to marry, to write and translate, to associate with other political exiles, and to engage in his favourite pastimes of hunting, fishing, skating, and chess—he only saw the inside of a Tsarist prison on one

single further occasion (ten days in June 1900) and, except for a period during the 1905 Revolution and its aftermath, when he was active in Tsarist territory, he stayed in self-imposed emigration, mainly in Western Europe. In practical security matters Lenin proved fallible and gullible; he allowed his party to be riddled with Okhrana agents and, against the evidence, he accepted the word of the most celebrated of them all, the Duma deputy, Roman Malinovskii.[67] In this field, for all his proffered advice on the tactics of insurrection, on methods of exterminating informers, and attacking police posts,[68] Lenin was the inexperienced theorist, Dzerzhinsky the professional. Even the October revolutionary *coup* in Petrograd was master-minded by Trotsky, with the fugitive Lenin still in hiding. But in character and intellect, Lenin was the quintessential revolutionary leader: he possessed the inner certitude, the compulsion to achieve power, the persuasiveness, the requisite ruthlessness, the readiness to sacrifice countless lives for the good of the cause, his sole criterion being that of expediency in the interest of the Revolution—*his* Revolution.

The lengths of cruelty and perfidy to which Lenin was prepared to go against the class enemy are illustrated by a handwritten note passed by him, at a meeting in August 1920, to Trotsky's deputy on the Revolutionary War Council, Sklianskii: 'A beautiful plan. Finish it off *together* with Dzerzhinsky. Under the guise of 'Greens' (and we will pin it on them later) we shall go forward for 10–20 versts and hang the *kulaks*, priests and landowners. Bounty: 100,000 roubles for each man hanged.'[69] This 'beautiful plan' must have concerned the Polish front, where Dzerzhinsky was then serving. By such a stratagem the Soviet forces would be doubly advantaged: at one stroke they would annihilate some of their most resolute class opponents in the countryside, whilst blaming the atrocity on the 'Green' bands of brigands and army deserters who obstructed the imposition of Soviet law and order.

Despite his ruthlessness, his exclusion of sentiment and compassion, Lenin was not without personal consideration (though always within the strict limits of revolutionary expediency), as he demonstrated by his frequent interventions in respect of individual Cheka prisoners.[70] He was concerned to establish, in each case that came to his attention, whether the arrest had been necessary on purely pragmatic security grounds. Why had the Kotelnichi Cheka arrested the teacher Lubnin?[71] Why had the Vecheka not released Kiril Semenovich Ginsburg, despite assurances given by two Party members?[72] Why had the Samara Provincial Cheka arrested the members of an expedition of irrigation experts to Turkestan?[73] Had the food-

confiscation detachments and the Gavrilovo-Posadnaia Cheka acted correctly in confiscating grain?[74] Could not Viktor Ivanovich Dobrovolskii, under arrest in Petrograd, be released? He was said to be ill, apolitical, and his family's only breadwinner. In this instance, despite Lenin's intercession, the Vecheka decided to confine Dobrovolskii, on charges of counter-revolutionary involvement, in a concentration camp until the end of the Civil War.[75] Occasionally Lenin's enquiries were accompanied by threats. On 20 May 1919, Lenin telegraphed to the executive committee of the Novgorod Soviet, with a copy to the local Cheka: 'It appears that Bulatov was arrested for putting a complaint to me. I warn you that for this I shall arrest the chairman of the Cheka and the chairman and members of the executive committee, and I shall press for their execution. Why did you not reply at the time to my enquiry?'[76]

Sometimes Lenin's interventions had a happy sequel. On 10 February 1919, Lenin informed the Vologda Cheka that he had received an appeal from the children of a certain Mikhailov, who had been taken from hospital straight to prison. It emerged that the local Cheka had already sentenced Mikhailov to death as an enemy of the people, on account of counter-revolutionary activity; following Lenin's enquiry the case was transferred to the Vecheka's Special Department (OO) which, finding the charges against Mikhailov insufficiently substantiated, passed the case on to the Revolutionary Tribunal attached to VTsIK. The Tribunal quashed the case and set Mikhailov free.[77] But for Lenin's intervention, Mikhailov would have been shot. One can only guess how many thousands of other guiltless Cheka prisoners were summarily executed without proper examination of the evidence brought against them.

Lenin's well-known show of concern for individuals went hand in hand with an impersonal cruelty. At the end of a Defence Council meeting Lenin arranged, with characteristic solicitude, for one of those present, a Menshevik timber expert named Liberman, who had a racking cough, to be driven home by Lenin's own chauffeur, yet at that very meeting he had ruled that state foresters should be shot by the Cheka if peasants, for whose work they were made responsible, failed to produce their full quota of firewood.[78]

As time went by and Lenin was increasingly faced with evidence of bureaucratic sloth and inefficiency, he tended more and more to apply Cheka action as a remedy for such failings. Terror became with him an administrative technique, a simple way of solving problems and achieving results when conventional means failed; armed with terror,

the Vecheka served as the Party's all-purpose agency, as the short cut to a given end.[79] The Cheka system, after all, was a vital means for putting Lenin's doctrine of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat into practice; indeed Lenin said as much when addressing a Cheka conference on 6 February 1920: 'In this struggle the Cheka organs should become the weapon for the realisation of the centralised will of the proletariat.'[80] And so the key for understanding the Red Terror and the Cheka phenomenon lies essentially in Lenin's doctrine and Lenin's character. A penetrating insight into that mind and character has been afforded by a contemporary observer, Alexander Berkman, himself an Anarchist, who came to Russia in January 1920 to serve the Revolution, only to depart in bitter disillusion. He concluded that Lenin's strength was intellectual, 'that of the profound conviction of an unimaginative nature'. After a meeting with Lenin he recorded:

> The total impression I carried away was that of a man of clarity of view and set purpose. Not necessarily a big man, but one of strong mind and unbending will. An unemotional logician, intellectually flexible and courageous enough to mould his methods to the requirements of the moment, but always keeping his final objective in clear signt. "A practical idealist" bent upon the realisation of his Communist dream by whatever means, and subordinating to it every ethical and humanitarian consideration. A man sincerely convinced that evil methods may serve a good purpose and be justified by it. A Jesuit of the Revolution who would force mankind to be free in accordance with his interpretation of Marx. In short, a thoroughgoing revolutionist in the sense of Nechaev, one who would sacrifice the greater part of mankind—if need be—to secure the triumph of the Social Revolution.[81]

Chapter IX

Revolutionary Justice: The Machinery of Repression

> The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is power secured and sustained through coercion of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat, a power unrestricted by any laws.
>
> Lenin (5), Vol. XXXVII, p. 245,
> written in October 1918

In 1921 Latsis characterised the Vecheka as follows:

> The Extraordinary Commission is not a commission of investigation, a law court or a tribunal. It is an organ of combat, functioning on the internal front of the civil war, utilising the methods of investigative commissions, of law courts, of tribunals and of the armed forces. It does not judge the enemy, but strikes him down. It does not pardon, but destroys all who bear arms on the other side of the barricades, and who cannot be utilised by us.... But neither is it a guillotine, which severs heads by decision of a tribunal. No, it either destroys without legal process those caught red-handed, or isolates them from society by detention in a concentration camp, or else hands them over to a tribunal when there is need of detailed investigation and wide publicity.... In circumstances of a civil war fought to the death, such an organ is indispensable to the proletariat.[1]

Similarly, Dzerzhinsky, in his speech on the occasion of the Vecheka's foundation, had asserted that, far from being an organ of revolutionary justice, the Cheka should be 'an organ for the revolutionary settlement of accounts with the counter-revolutionaries',[2] that is, an extra-judicial agency for dispensing summary justice. And so it was; the Cheka became an effective weapon of direct action, wielded by the Party in defence of its interests. In the inevitable clash between the arbitrary violence of the Cheka and the system of Soviet law evolved by the People's Commissariat for Justice, the Cheka gained the upper hand whenever the régime came under threat; when crises receded, the NKIu won the advantage.

Not that the NKIu proceeded impartially; far from it. Soviet law itself, like the Soviet state, was seen by Lenin essentially as the product of class conflict, the expression of the will of the victorious proletariat, a law applied with deliberate discrimination in accordance with the principle of revolutionary consciousness. 'Our courts', said

Lenin in 1921, 'are class courts, against the bourgeoisie.'[3] Moreover, Soviet law, besides being a weapon of class warfare, imposing the domination of the proletariat over the former oppressing classes, was also a means of inculcating labour discipline in that very proletariat—a means of its regimentation. In March 1918, Lenin wrote very frankly:

> The new system of law was needed, first of all, to combat the exploiters striving to restore their rule.... Furthermore the courts, if they be truly organised on Soviet institutional principles, have a second, even more important, task. It is the task of securing the strictest fulfilment of discipline and self-discipline of the workers. We would be ludicrous utopians if we imagined that such an aim could be attained on the morrow of the collapse of bourgeois authority, i.e. during the first stage of transition from capitalism to socialism, or—without compulsion. Without compulsion such an aim is altogether unattainable. We need the state, we need compulsion. The Soviet courts of law should be the organs of the proletarian state accomplishing such compulsion. And upon them is laid the enormous task of educating the people in labour discipline.[4]

Soon afterwards, in April, Lenin committed to paper some ideas on labour discipline: 'Labour conscription, introduced from the top. Recognition that absolutely essential and urgent are the most merciless measures for combating chaos, disorder and idleness, as well as the most decisive and draconic measures for raising the workers' and peasants' discipline and self-discipline.'[5]

The Soviet system of law, operated by the People's Commissariat for Justice, was inaugurated by Decree No. 1 on the Courts, published over Lenin's signature on 24 November 1917;[6] it replaced the existing machinery of justice by a new legal apparatus intended to serve the interests, and reflect the will, of the victorious proletariat. Two types of law court were introduced: local courts (later known as People's Courts), consisting of a judge and two assessors, concerned with civil and criminal cases; and Revolutionary Tribunals, initially consisting of a president and six assessors, elected by Soviets and designed to combat acts of counter-revolution committed primarily against the state. Preliminary investigation of such acts was to be conducted by investigative commissions attached to Soviets.

The terms of reference of Revolutionary Tribunals were elaborated in a statutory instruction of 19 December 1917, published on 21 December, [7] authorising such tribunals to deal with a wide range of offences against the interests of the state, such as: organising, or inciting to, insurrection, misuse of public office, sabotage, hoarding or destruction of commodities in general demand, infringement of certain decrees, etc. Sanctions at the Revolutionary Tribunals'

disposal included fines, imprisonment, banishment, public disgrace, branding as 'enemies of the people', deprivation of civil rights, confiscation of property and sentencing to compulsory public labour, but not (until June 1918) sentence of death. In imposing a penalty, the Revolutionary Tribunal was to be guided by circumstances, facts, and the 'dictates of revolutionary conscience'. Revolutionary Tribunals were to consist of a president and two deputies, a secretary with two deputies, and forty assessors. The preliminary investigation of every case was to be effected by an investigative commission composed of six persons elected by the Soviets; within forty-eight hours of an indictment the commission should investigate the charge and either dismiss it as unfounded, or else direct it to the courts or to a Revolutionary Tribunal. Sessions of Revolutionary Tribunals should take place in public, in the presence of accuser and accused, the Tribunals' decision being final. The organisation of Revolutionary Tribunals was further developed by decrees of 17 May 1918[8] and 9 June 1918[9] (the latter establishing the superior Revolutionary Tribunal attached to VTsIK, with its own investigation commission), and their competence was added to by official restoration of the death penalty on 16 June 1918;[10] the first execution under the law occurred five days later.

The Revolutionary Tribunals were even less impartial than the People's Courts, as was admitted by Kurskii, Commissar for Justice: 'The Revolutionary Tribunals are not courts in the real sense of the word, but special organisations for the fight against counter-revolution ... and are, although temporary, nevertheless absolutely indispensable organisations of the political struggle.'[11] A similar opinion was voiced by Larin, a high NKIu official, at the Fourth Congress of Judicial Workers: 'We always looked upon the Revolutionary Tribunals as ... on a court of class dictatorship, as on a court of political struggle and not as a court in the proper sense of the word.... The principle of suppression prevailed over that of justice.'[12]

Meanwhile, the Vecheka, having started life modestly as one of several investigation agencies, was gradually extending its scope. Under its original charter of 7(20) December 1917, it was required to hand over all counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs to Revolutionary Tribunals for trial, its own rather low-key punitive powers—administrative and extra-judicial in character—being limited to confiscation, expropriation, deprivation of ration cards, and publication of lists of enemies of the people. As we have seen in preceding chapters, on 16(29) December 1917, the Vecheka acquired the right

of arrest;[13] in late February 1918 it began, still sparingly, to practise summary execution of criminals under the terms of Lenin's decree 'The Socialist Fatherland is in Danger', resorting to execution of political adversaries immediately after the abortive LSR Rising of 6 July 1918. The months of July and August 1918 saw the Chekas, now rid of LSR restraint, playing an increasingly active role, alongside Revolutionary Tribunals and punitive expeditions, in suppressing peasant rebellions and executing participants in counter-revolutionary insurrections. But it was when the officially proclaimed Red Terror erupted in response to the attempt on Lenin's life that the Chekas, by then functioning in every province and district of Soviet territory, became the régime's principal organs of repression: the Sovnarkom decree of 5 September 1918[14] specifically charged the Chekas to implement the Red Terror, granting them wide summary powers to execute counter-revolutionaries and hostages, and to isolate class enemies in concentration camps. Dzerzhinsky's Vecheka instruction of 17 September 1918 authorised the Chekas, after investigation of cases posing a threat to state security, to 'liquidate' (i.e. to terminate, by execution where appropriate) these cases by themselves, instead of handing them over, along with cases of profiteering and lesser cases of misuse of authority, to People's Courts and Revolutionary Tribunals for trial.[15]

So, by the late summer of 1918, three separate punitive systems were in operation: the People's Courts—dealing with crimes against the individual; the Revolutionary Tribunals; and the Chekas—these last two institutions being concerned with crimes against the state, crimes covering the wide gamut of counter-revolution, profiteering, and misuse of authority. But whilst the People's Courts and the Revolutionary Tribunals were judicial organs, working within the (admittedly elastic and avowedly class-prejudiced) rules of Soviet legal procedure and therefore subject to certain restraints, the Chekas were explicitly administrative organs, with ill-defined and virtually unlimited extra-judicial powers, capable of arbitrary action, riding roughshod over opposition and objection—even on the part of major departments of state such as the NKIu and the NKVD.[16]

The similar objectives of, and lack of demarcation of competence between, the Chekas and the Revolutionary Tribunals inevitably resulted in conflict between these parallel agencies and between their parent bodies, a conflict only partially resolved by the VTsIK decree of 21 February 1919[17] whereby the right to pass and carry out sentence was transferred from the Chekas to the reorganised Revolutionary Tribunals, but still stipulating that the Chekas could

exercise summary justice in cases of armed revolt and in areas under martial law, besides affording the Chekas the unrestricted right to confine in concentration camps. Summary justice continued to be applied widely throughout 1919, a year of Civil War marked by sharp vicissitudes.

PRISONS UNDER THE NKIu

Three distinct types of imprisonment coexisted under Lenin's rule: conventional prisons presided over by the Commissariat of Justice, forced labour camps run by the Commissariat for Internal Affairs in conjunction with the Chekas, and concentration camps maintained by the Chekas, primarily for the isolation of class enemies. The Chekas of course also investigated or held as hostages many thousands of prisoners detained in conventional prisons.

On 12(25) December 1917, the NKIu established an Administration of Prisons (*Tiuremnoe upravlenie*)[18] which, on 24 May 1918, was reorganised and renamed the (NKIu) Penal Department (*Karatelnyi otdel*), whose functions were defined in a Temporary Instruction of 23 June 1918; subordinated to it were Penal Sub-Departments of the Justice Departments attached to provincial Soviet executive committees, these Sub-Departments being responsible for all NKIu places of detention in each province. An NKIu ordinance of 9 September 1919 altered the Penal Department's status to that of Central Penal Department, whilst in 1921 it became the Central Corrective Department, its territorial branches being named Corrective Labour Sub-Departments (*Ispravitelno-trudovye podotdely*).[19]

Two contradictory concepts underlay Soviet penal policy: that of reforming and that of punishing the offender. The first of these, which found expression in the Party programme adopted in March 1919, was in accord with the Marxist idea that man is the product of his economic environment, and that if the latter were improved, i.e. by ridding society of capitalism, crime would vanish. Criminals must be reformed, not punished, the means of such reform being 'corrective labour'. By contrast the second concept, born of the Leninist doctrine of the proletarian dictatorship repressing its class enemies, envisaged the stern punishment of these enemies, also by labour, or else by isolation from society in concentration camps; class enemies, by definition, were regarded as beyond redemption. In practice labour, whether viewed as corrective or as punitive, came to be applied to both categories: criminals, counter-revolutionaries (class enemies), and eventually also political opponents (socialists, Anarchists), would

find themselves performing forced labour side by side in prison and concentration camp.[20] Labour was the great leveller.

By the decree of 19 December 1917,[21] 'obligatory social labour' was prescribed as one of the penalties imposable by Revolutionary Tribunal and a month later another decree[22] specified that prisoners could be formed into labour brigades to carry out necessary state work. An NKIu decree of 23 July 1918 'On deprivation of liberty as a measure of punishment and on the manner of undergoing it',[23] laid down that a sentence of deprivation of liberty (characteristic euphemism for imprisonment) necessarily involved obligatory labour. This was the decree—significantly adopted shortly after the LSRs had been crushed—which marked the start of the Communist system of compulsory convict labour.

From the outset we find Lenin, reviving the tradition of Tsarist *katorga* (penal servitude), applying forced labour as a sanction: on 29 December 1917, he telegraphed to Antonov-Ovseenko proposing that fifteen Kharkov capitalists who refused to pay their employees at eight-hour-working-day rates should be sent down a mine for six months of forced labour.[24] In the same month, Lenin urged that forced labour should be one of the punishments applied to offenders against a proposed law on bank nationalisation.[25] In a note of 4 May 1918 to Kurskii, he proposed a statute making bribery punishable by not less than ten years imprisonment with hard labour,[26] a term of punishment modified to not less than five years in the resultant statute of 8 May,[27] Further, a Sovnarkom decree of 22 July 1918, signed by Lenin, stipulated that black marketeers should receive minimum sentences of ten years imprisonment combined with the harshest forced labour.[28]

FORCED LABOUR CAMPS UNDER THE NKVD

The Soviet forced labour camp concept, which was ultimately to burgeon into the massive slave labour system of the Stalin era, was formally introduced, in the context of compulsory labour mobilisation, by a decree passed by the VTsIK Presidium on 11 April[29] and published on 15 April 1919;[30] the decree provided for the establishment of forced labour camps (*lageria prinuditelnykh rabot*) attached to executive committees of Soviets at provincial and, if authorised by the NKVD, at district level, such camps to be initially organised and directed by Provincial Chekas, and then handed over to departments of administration of Soviet executive committees. Those confined could be committed to the camps by People's Courts, Revolutionary Tribunals, Chekas, departments of administration of local Soviets,

and other authorised agencies. Close co-operation in this instance between the NKVD and the Vecheka—as also between their respective territorial branches—was of course assured by Dzerzhinsky's appointment in March 1919 as Commissar for Internal Affairs; the forced labour camp project was one of the first NKVD enterprises launched under Dzerzhinsky's aegis.

The decree provided for an NKVD central administration of camps to be set up in consultation with the Vecheka. Under a further decree, passed by the VTsIK Presidium on 12 May[31] and published on 17 May 1919,[32] the NKVD Department for Forced Labour (*Otdel prinuditelnykh rabot*) was made responsible for direction of all forced labour camps in the RSFSR. Such camps, having a minimum holding capacity of 300 persons, were to be opened in every chief provincial city, and, if approved by the NKVD, also in some towns at district level. As at January 1920, the Department for Forced Labour constituted an important component of the NKVD; in charge was Kedrov, by then a Collegium member of both NKVD and Vecheka.[33]

Initially these forced labour camps were intended primarily for workers who had infringed labour regulations, and their prison regimen was not, at this early stage, a particularly harsh one. Virtually all able-bodied detainees had to perform physical labour, their working hours, overtime, etc., being subject to normal Labour Code regulations; labour was paid at trade union rates, and food-rations equalled those of free workers doing similar work. On the other hand, penalties could be severe: a first attempt at escape was punishable by a tenfold increase in the original term of imprisonment, a second escape bid being subject to sentence by Revolutionary Tribunal, which could impose the death penalty.[34] A VTsIK decree of 18 March 1920 specified that 'for the purpose of combating violators of labour discipline, safeguarding revolutionary order, and combating parasitical elements of the population against whom there is insufficient evidence for bringing criminal proceedings, the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission and, subject to confirmation by the latter, the Provincial Extraordinary Commissions, have the right to commit persons to a forced labour camp for a term not exceeding five years'.[35]

By May 1920, the Department for Forced Labour had become the Chief Administration for Forced Labour (*Glavnoe upravlenie prinuditelnykh rabot*—GUPR),[36] but in that month it was once more renamed (temporarily, as it turned out), this time as the Chief Administration for Public Work and Labour Conscription (*Glavnoe upravlenie obshchestvennykh rabot i povinnostei*), still under the NKVD, the latter having meanwhile been commissioned to combat

labour desertion.[37] With the ending of the Civil War in late 1920, the Administration reverted to its previous title (i.e. GUPR). At that time the NKVD of the RSFSR operated 84 forced labour camps distributed over 43 provinces and holding 25,336 detainees, besides 24,400 Civil War prisoners.[38] These figures, especially that for Civil War prisoners, are surprisingly small; Solzhenitsyn suggests that this may have been due to the Soviet practice (independently reported from other sources) of emptying prisons by physical mass extermination, for instance by cramming barges with prisoners and then sinking them.[39] Available figures for NKVD (RSFSR) forced labour camps over the Vecheka-GPU period are:

1 Jan. 1920[40]	34 camps	8,660 inmates
late 1920[41]	84 camps	25,336 inmates
1 Jan. 1921[42]	107 camps	51,158 inmates
1 Sept. 1921[43]	117 camps	60,457 inmates
1 Dec. 1921[44]	120 camps	40,913 inmates
Oct. 1922[45]	132 camps	60,000 inmates (approx.)

Significantly, of 17,000 camp detainees on whom statistical information was available on 1 November 1920, peasants and workers constituted the largest groups, at 39% and 34% respectively.[46] Similarly, of the 40,913 prisoners held in December 1921 (of whom 44% had been committed by the Chekas), nearly 80% were illiterate or minimally educated, clearly, therefore, either peasants or workers.[47] Of the 17,000 detainees referred to above, approximately 4,500 were imprisoned for counter-revolution, 3,500 for crime, 3,000 for speculation, 3,000 for military desertion, 2,000 for misuse of authority.[48] As at December 1921, one year later, about 17% of the forced labour camp population were confined for counter-revolution, 28.5% for crime, and 18.3% for 'anti-social' offences.[49]

In July 1922, the Sovnarkom ruled that all places of detention, including those directed by the NKIu, should be combined under the NKVD, which by then contained the Vecheka's successor, the GPU; pursuant thereto, by a joint NKVD and NKIu decision of 12 October 1922, the Central Corrective Labour Department of the NKIu was absorbed by the NKVD and merged with the latter's GUPR to form the Chief Administration of Places of Detention—GUMZ.[50]

CONCENTRATION CAMPS UNDER THE VECHEKA

Separately, a system of concentration camps was established under Vecheka control, intended originally for the isolation of potentially dangerous class enemies, though presently extended to include

refractory workers. The concentration camp employed as a military security device was not a Soviet invention. During the South African War of 1901–2, the British confined non-combatants of the Republic of Transvaal and Cape Colony in concentration camps so as to prevent them from engaging in guerrilla warfare or providing aid to enemy forces; there are earlier such examples. On the other hand, the political concentration camp, used in civil war or in peacetime to isolate and oppress political opponents or 'class enemies', is an institution peculiar to twentieth-century dictatorships, seemingly originating in Soviet Russia.[51]

One of the first significant references to concentration camps under the Soviet régime appeared in Lenin's telegram of 9 August 1918 to the executive committee of the Soviet of Penza Province, where an armed rising had occurred, ordering 'merciless mass terror against the *kulaks*, priests and White Guards; unreliable elements to be locked up in a concentration camp outside the town'.[52] A Vecheka proclamation of 31 August 1918, published on 3 September, declared that 'anyone who dares to agitate against Soviet authority will be arrested immediately and confined in a concentration camp'.[53] The Sovnarkom decree of 5 September 1918 'on the Red Terror' set the seal of state authority on the new institution, announcing: 'It is essential to safeguard the Soviet Republic from its class enemies by isolating them in concentration camps.'[54] Many of these camps were located in evacuated monasteries; in Nizhnii Novgorod a convent was converted for this purpose, intended to hold initially 5,000 detainees.[55]

Confinement in a concentration camp was an administrative not a judicial measure, and these camps were from the outset under Cheka control.[56] In his speech before VTsIK, on 17 February 1919, proposing the decree for the transfer of the right to pass and carry out sentence from the Chekas to the Revolutionary Tribunals, Dzerzhinsky recommended that the Vecheka should nevertheless continue to exercise the administrative right to confine persons in concentration camps, and that camp inmates—such as 'gentlemen without employment' and 'those unable to work without compulsion'—should be forced to perform socially useful work; concentration camps should serve as a 'school of labour' for the punishment of Soviet employees for slacking, negligence, and lateness.[57] This Cheka prerogative was promptly approved by VTsIK decree.[58]

Although a decree of November 1919 prescribed that 'particularly obstructive workers who repeatedly refuse to submit to disciplinary measures' should be relegated to concentration camps,[59] such camps were generally reserved for confinement of class enemies, committed

by the Chekas for the duration of the Civil War.[60] Despite the ending of the Civil War in November 1920, Dzerzhinsky's instruction of 8 January 1921 on Cheka penal policy expressly ordered that special concentration camps should be formed in order to segregate detained members of the bourgeoisie from peasants and workers who were swamping the prisons.[61]

Comparatively little is reliably known about the immediate post-Civil War stage in the history of Soviet concentration camps. According to one authority, the NKVD (which, upon the transformation in February 1922 of the Vecheka into the GPU, absorbed the latter) had, under its jurisdiction in 1922, 56 concentration camps with a holding capacity of 24,750 detainees; by 1923, the year of their reported abolition, only 23 such camps existed.[62] This 'abolition' is presumably a euphemism for their conversion into the notorious Northern Camps of Special Purpose (*Severnye Lageria Osobogo Naznacheniia*, i.e. SLON, to use the Russian acronym, meaning elephant). These camps were sited on the remote White Sea coast in Archangel Province, and presently extended to the archipelago of off-shore Solovetskii Islands, colloquially called Solovki, isolated from the mainland by ice floes from October to June.[63] At some point during 1921–3, the ancient monastery on the principal island became the headquarters of the SLON complex of camps.[64]

A recent Soviet textbook on Corrective Labour Law refers to this detention complex, established in 1920, as constituting the first Soviet 'Camps of Special Purpose': they were reserved, in the concentration camp tradition, for the isolation of 'hostile class elements'. Concentrated there were 'members of counter-revolutionary organisations, White Guardists [i.e. White Army prisoners], reactionary clergy, etc.'[65]—but also rebels captured in the widespread (overwhelmingly peasant) insurrections of Tambov, the Ukraine, the Don and Kuban lands, and Siberia, besides many members of the intelligentsia.[66] Their conditions of existence were harsh in the extreme.[67] Mass exterminations took place in Kholmogory camp (on the river Dvina, near Archangel) until that camp (reportedly opened in late 1919) was closed down in August 1922.[68] These repeated massacres make estimates of the concentration camp population at this time meaningless.

The SLON detainees fell into three main categories: (1) criminals who were considered incorrigible; (2) 'counter-revolutionaries' ('KRs'), i.e. White Army officers, members of right-wing or liberal parties, captured insurgents, etc.; and (3) 'politicals', belonging to socialist or Anarchist parties. The first contingents of prisoners

despatched to the Northern Camps were White Army officers, later joined by numerous Kronstadt rebels. Anarchists arrived in February 1922, followed by socialists. Very few of the variegated concentration camp community had been sentenced by regular courts; the majority had been disposed of administratively by the political police.[69] The administrative personnel were imprisoned Chekists, punished for 'too open robbery, taking of bribes, drunkenness and other breaches of discipline'.[70]

PRISONERS OF THE CHEKAS—SOME EARLY STATISTICS

As we have seen, prisoners of the Chekas (all committed by administrative decision, and not by court of law) were variously held in ordinary prisons under the NKIu, in NKVD forced labour camps, and in concentration camps run by the Chekas themselves. In 1920, Latsis produced two differing sets of statistics regarding Cheka prisoners detained in Soviet controlled RSFSR territory during 1918–19. One set of figures stopped short at July 1919:

	1918	*1919* (up to July)	*Total*
Concentration Camps	1,791	7,305	9,496 (*sic*)
Prisons	21,988	12,346	34,334
Hostages	3,061	10,050	13,111
Total arrested	42,254	44,639	86,893 [71]

The other set of statistics (covering the entire period 1918–19) appeared in Latsis's long *Izvestia* article of 6 February 1920, entitled 'The Truth about the Red Terror', in which he endeavoured to demonstrate how moderate the Vecheka's record really was.

	1918	*1919*	*Total*
Concentration Camps	6,407	7,488	13,895
Forced Labour Camps	—	4,139	4,139
Prisons	14,829	21,697	36,526
Hostages	4,068	5,491	9,559
Executed	6,185	3,456	9,641
Released	15,859	38,391	54,250[72]
Total Arrested	47,348	80,662	128,010

Not only are the two lots of figures markedly inconsistent, but they

also appear to be strikingly inadequate, for instance in respect of the numbers of executions.

Of course the Chekas were not alone in detaining people, whether in prison, forced labour camp, or concentration camp. From official statistics (for the RSFSR only) we learn that, as at 1 October 1920, NKIu prisons held 48,112 prisoners, of which total 16,474 had been committed by Revolutionary Tribunals, and 14,295 by Chekas.[73] Similarly, in his report on prisons during 1920, the Commissar for Justice estimated that the NKIu prison population amounted to some 60,000, of whom almost one-third had been consigned by the Chekas.[74] By the end of 1921, the 267 NKIu prisons contained more than 73,000 inmates, despite the more liberal conditions ensuing after the Civil War and the start of the New Economic Policy; surprisingly, the proportion of prisoners consigned by the Chekas apparently represented only 4.4% in Moscow, 12.3% in the industrial provinces, but as much as 48.3% in Siberia.[75] This is in marked contrast to high levels of Cheka prisoners recorded in a Rabkrin commission report (quoted below) on its inspection of Moscow prisons in April 1920. However, it is true that by late 1921 Siberia had become the scene of persistent insurrection, whereas with the suppression of the Tambov revolt, relative peace was restored to Russia's central provinces.

CATEGORIES OF REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNALS

The various types of Revolutionary Tribunals of the RSFSR plied a busy trade, and their power to inflict the death penalty was not affected by the restrictions placed upon the Vecheka by the decree of 21 February 1919. During 1920, the conventional Revolutionary Tribunals tried 36,903 cases and found 23,325 individuals guilty, of whom 16,107 were given prison sentences, 1,421 were sentenced to forced labour without imprisonment, and only 766 were condemned to death.[76] Over the same period, out of 167,162 cases tried, the Revolutionary Military Tribunals secured 89,466 convictions, sentencing 31,275 to imprisonment, 15,380 to terms in concentration camps and penal battalions, and 5,757 to death.[77] The equivalent figures for sentences passed by the Revolutionary Military Railway Tribunals were: 3,653 to prison, 1,080 to concentration camp, and 349 to death.[78]

The central Revolutionary Military Tribunal was created by *Revvoensovet* order of 14 October 1918,[79] and was formally established by statute on 4 February 1919.[80] It was subordinated not to the NKIu but to the *Revvoensovet*; its subsidiary Revolutionary Military Tribunals, attached to Fronts and Armies, were designed to

operate under conditions of civil war, on the analogy of courts martial. On 11 January 1920, the *Revvoensovet* set up a Revolutionary Military VOKhR Tribunal, to deal with offences committed by VOKhR personnel;[81] VOKhR—the Internal Security Troops—had been formed in May 1919 to function under NKVD auspices but under factual Vecheka command, combining various departmental ancillary troops. By an order of 17 March 1920, signed by Dzerzhinsky (as Vecheka Chairman) and by the *Revvoensovet* Chairman, Revolutionary Military VOKhR Tribunals were empowered to deal with cases of armed banditry in the military front zones.[82] Under a statute of 18 March 1920, published on 27 March,[83] the system of Revolutionary Military Railway Tribunals, subordinated to the Commissariat for Communications (NKPS), was created to serve the needs of railway transport; the principal such Railway Tribunal, attached to the NKPS, included on its board the chief of the Vecheka Transport Department, whilst its subsidiary tribunals, attached to each railway administration, included on their boards the chief of the appropriate Area Transport Cheka. It will be recalled that under another VTsIK decree of 18 March 1920,[84] a Cheka representative was to be included on the three-man panels of the standard Revolutionary Tribunals and of the Revolutionary Military Tribunals, thereby giving the Chekas a considerable say in the deliberations and verdicts of these judicial bodies.

THE VECHEKA AND SUMMARY JUSTICE

Although, under the VTsIK decree of 17 February 1919, the Chekas' right to exercise summary justice had been restricted to instances of armed rebellion and banditry and to areas under martial law,[85] this still left the Chekas plenty of scope for action in the critical conditions of Civil War prevailing during most of that year. Their hand was strengthened in consequence of Dzerzhinsky's proposal, put to the Party Central Committee on 11 June 1919, recommending that the Chekas' right to execute in areas under martial law should cover wider categories of persons;[86] the resulting VTsIK decree of 20 June 1919[87] detailed a ten-point list of offences the commission of which in territory under martial law was punishable on the part of Provincial Chekas by summary justice—synonymous with shooting out of hand. The list covered such offences as membership of counter-revolutionary organisations, conspiracy against Soviet authority, treason, espionage, harbouring traitors and spies, concealment of weapons, counterfeiting money and forging documents, arson, causing damage to railway, military, or communications equipment and supplies, armed robbery,

and looting government stores. Dzerzhinsky's corresponding instruction of 23 June to Provincial Chekas emphasised that theirs was the responsibility for maintaining security and revolutionary order on the internal front; however, any misuse of these far-reaching powers would be punishable by execution.[88]

By the end of 1919, the White armies had been defeated on all three fronts, the Ukraine had been recovered, and the RSFSR itself stood free of any immediate external or internal threat. To his credit, Dzerzhinsky now took the initiative in sponsoring the abolition of the death penalty. On 15 January 1920, the Soviet press published the Vecheka's resolution, signed by Dzerzhinsky, directing all local Chekas to cease applying the death penalty forthwith, and proposing that a government decree should similarly disarm the Revolutionary Tribunals.[89] It was Dzerzhinsky, too, who on 17 January submitted to the Sovnarkom[90] a decree, signed that day by Lenin and Dzerzhinsky (in his Vecheka capacity) and, after confirmation by VTsIK, published on 22 January, formally abolishing the death penalty as practised by the Vecheka, its local Chekas, and by Revolutionary Tribunals.[91] (But the Chekas cheated by hurriedly executing large numbers of prisoners, in Moscow (300), Petrograd (400), and elsewhere just before the proclamation of the decree.)[92] The decree omitted to mention that the right to apply the death penalty was nevertheless retained by the Revolutionary Military Tribunals, functioning in the military front zones.

But the period of Cheka (and Revolutionary Tribunal) self-denial was all too brief. Already on 28 January the VTsIK Presidium passed a confidential ruling that in territory administered by Revolutionary Military Councils of Fronts, namely in military front zones, the Provincial Chekas and Provincial Revolutionary Tribunals should exercise the same powers as Revolutionary Military Tribunals, i.e. should be free to apply the death penalty.[93] Furthermore, by virtue of deliberately unpublished paragraphs in a decree signed by Lenin on 19 February, the Sovnarkom authorised the Vecheka and central Revolutionary Tribunal jointly to establish Revolutionary Military Tribunals which were to operate *outside* the military front zones.[94] The Chekas made full use of these various unpublished powers. Moreover, evasion of the restrictions on executions was practised regularly and blatantly. On 15 April 1920, the Vecheka Special Department (OO) sent a circular, signed by Yagoda as chief of administration of that department, recommending that persons whose crimes would normally have incurred sentence of death should be

transferred to the military front zone where the abolition of the death penalty had no force.[95] This form of subterfuge was widespread.[96]

Soon enough, in any case, the renewal of hostilities brought about an extensive and publicised restoration of the death penalty; following the Polish military incursion launched on 25 April 1920, the Soviet Government on 11 May proclaimed martial law throughout twenty-four provinces and restored to Revolutionary Tribunals the right to pass death sentences.[97] For the effective implementation of martial law, a Defence Council and VTsIK decree of 28 May established a special Defence Council Collegium consisting of Avanesov (chairman), Messing, and Antonov-Ovseenko (the first two out of the three being Chekists), and openly conferred upon the Vecheka and its authorised organs the powers proper to Revolutionary Military Tribunals for dealing with infringements of the RSFSR's military security—a circumlocution signifying powers inclusive of the death penalty.[98] The Chekas were well equipped to mete out to enemies of the Republic the 'merciless repression' required by the decree. Thereafter, despite the ending of the Polish War in October, and of the Civil War in November 1920, the Vecheka and its agencies continued to apply summary justice to wide categories of prisoners (subject to certain restrictions introduced by decree of 23 June 1921)[99] until its own replacement by the GPU in February 1922; the GPU, initially denied punitive powers, soon acquired these.

The periodic Soviet amnesties were not strictly observed by the Chekas. The respected socialist politician and historian, S. P. Melgunov, noted that an amnesty was always preceded by a holocaust of Cheka executions; one such bloodbath occurred within his own experience (when he was himself confined in Moscow's Butyrki gaol in November 1920) during the night preceding an amnesty celebrating the anniversary of the October Revolution.[100] Anyhow, most of the many amnesties declared over the period 1919–21 did not apply to political prisoners or to other categories of prime interest to the Vecheka.[101]

A facility acquired by the NKVD, and therefore presumably exercised in favour of the Vecheka, was control over the declaration of a state of emergency (martial law)—under whose terms summary justice was authorised in the pertinent area; by a VTsIK and Defence Council (STO) decree of 4 November 1920, the function of initiating a state of emergency was transferred from STO to the NKVD. The latter thereby assumed responsibility for recommending to VTsIK, Sovnarkom, and STO that a state of emergency be declared in a given locality; in urgent cases the NKVD was itself competent to impose a

state of emergency (informing the Sovnarkom immediately afterwards) and to direct its implementation.[102]

THE CHEKIST CODE OF CONDUCT: MYTH AND REALITY

In Lenin's state there was an inherent tension between the system of Soviet law, supposedly formulated as the juridical expression of the will of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, on the other hand, the immediate interests of the Communist régime which, especially in times of crisis, might call for arbitrary action that contradicted and overrode the dictates of the current law. This tension was implicit in the relationship existing between the guardian of the law, the People's Commissariat for Justice, and the Extraordinary Commission, which of course functioned extra-judicially, often in defiance of the accepted rules of law and state. Lenin was at the heart of this dichotomy, at times literally laying down the law, at other times defending the autonomy of the Chekas, and, throughout, maintaining a double standard, an alternation of socialist legality and revolutionary expediency. The law was for Lenin a convenience, a most useful instrument by means of which the dictatorship of the proletariat exercised its power, but by which it was not itself fettered. Lenin was quite explicit on this point: 'The scientific concept of dictatorship means nothing else but this: power without limit, resting directly upon force, restrained by no laws, absolutely unrestricted by rules.'[103]

At the height of the Red Terror, the implementation of which by the Chekas provoked such bitter Party criticism, it proved expedient to invoke the law; Lenin's pacifying purpose found expression at the Sixth Congress of Soviets in the resolution, drafted by him[104] and tabled on 8 November 1918 by the Commissar for Justice, Kurskii, 'on the strict observance of laws'. The resolution, adopted as a statute, nevertheless allowed for special circumstances which might justify the by-passing of laws: 'measures at variance with RSFSR laws, or going beyond their bounds, are admissible only in cases when they are occasioned by the exceptional conditions of civil war and struggle against counter-revolution'.[105] Similarly, after the introduction of the New Economic Policy in March 1921, Lenin would find it advantageous to proclaim the slogan of revolutionary legality (*revoliutsionnaia zakonnost*) and to go through the formal motions of abolishing the Vecheka, which had become the symbol for arbitrary repression.

The Chekas suffered from this ambivalent policy: the same men who for months and even years on end had to perform a most cruel and unnatural duty were expected to remain morally undefiled,

impervious to temptation, and exemplars of Dzerzhinsky's ideal of a Chekist as a man with 'a cool head, a warm heart and clean hands'.[106] The brutalising effect of the Chekist trade was frankly admitted by its own practitioners: the Vecheka Party fraction's letter of 28 January 1919 in *Izvestia* spoke openly of Chekists who 'so frequently get onto a slippery path and fall.... This slippery path threatens all persons of weak character who have joined the Chekas and obtained responsible appointments.' We have also already noted Latsis's comment that only Chekists of exceptional integrity could hope to escape the corrupting effect of exercising 'almost unlimited power' in 'conditions deeply affecting the nervous system'.[107]

For Chekists this was a hopeless dilemma, and one that troubled Dzerzhinsky deeply. He himself proved incorruptible in character (though his choice of unethical methods inevitably compromised his shining ideals) and was dubbed the Russian equivalent of *un chevalier sans peur et sans reproche.* Aware of the horrifying reputation for cruelty and corruption gained by his men, he set them a strict, indeed a scarcely attainable, code of moral conduct. And so we find the Vecheka issuing, in March 1918 or soon thereafter, 'Instruction No. 1 on how to conduct searches and arrests', opening almost naively: 'The forcible entry of armed men into a private home and the denial of liberty to culpable people is an evil to which we have to resort even today, in order that goodness and truth might prevail. But it must always be remembered that it is an evil, and that it is our task, by using such an evil, to do away with the necessity to resort to such means in the future.' Consequently, continued the instruction, it behove all Cheka personnel to treat considerately the people they searched, arrested, and imprisoned, scrupulously refraining from abusive language, threats, and brandishing of firearms.[108] This instruction arose out of an incident in which a Chekist interrogator struck a prisoner; hearing of this, Dzerzhinsky personally investigated the matter, delivered a serious reprimand, and ruled that in future anyone maltreating a prisoner would undergo trial.[109] Shortly afterwards, on 26 April 1918, Dzerzhinsky already judged it necessary to purge the Vecheka's personnel.[110]

A memorandum of July 1918 reminded all Chekists that every investigator must always behave correctly, politely, and resourcefully, strictly adhering to revolutionary protocol. A similar precept was conveyed in a Vecheka order of 23 June 1920, 'On the correct conduct of Chekist personnel towards prisoners'.[111] A Vecheka order of 7 December 1919 cautioned that arrests must not be made solely on the strength of rumour or suspicion. An unexceptionable circular

of 23 March 1920 directed that 'not a single person innocent of any proven offence can be arrested by the Chekas'.[112] Indeed, Dzerzhinsky went even further: in a note to Unshlikht (which, however, does not appear to have been turned into a Vecheka instruction) he exhorted: 'Better a thousand times err on the side of liberality than send an inactive person into exile, whence he will assuredly return active, his sentence having mobilised him against us.'[113] In a circular of 28 February 1920, Dzerzhinsky required that Chekists should be conversant with, and should strictly obey, Soviet decrees.[114] A year later, he still felt it necessary to propose issuing a circular to all Chekas and Special Departments (OOs), warning Chekists against the many temptations to which their work inevitably exposed them; Extraordinary Commissions must 'mercilessly and unfailingly cast out the weak, and harshly punish the guilty'.[115]

Dzerzhinsky himself stoutly defended his personnel against public criticism (as in the Kosyrev case of February 1919), but was the first to punish erring Chekists severely as a matter of internal discipline, *pour encourager les autres*. A striking example was the case of D. Ia. Chudin, a member of the Petrograd Cheka Collegium, who, persuaded by his mistress, used his influence on behalf of her arrested black marketeer friends; Dzerzhinsky headed a commission of three Vecheka members which, on 22 August 1919, sentenced both Chudin and his mistress to death—they were shot the following day.[116] Latsis discussed the general problem facing the Vecheka:

> Naturally such a widely ramified apparatus, needing tens of thousands of personnel, could not ensure their universal, unfailing honesty. Often unworthy elements, sometimes even counter-revolutionaries, attached themselves to the Vecheka, some for motives of personal gain. There was a lot of trouble, particularly among the junior staff. All this soon caused dissatisfaction with Vecheka personnel, and some Soviet comrades, especially Krylenko, openly demanded the contraction of the Vecheka apparatus and restriction of its rights. Comrade Dzerzhinsky set about eradicating this evil, and with a red-hot iron cauterised the open sore. He made the severest demands on his staff, and punished their offences with the utmost severity. Shooting—that was the punishment meted out to those of his workers who exploited their official position for personal profit or pleasure. Quite often Comrade Dzerzhinsky would penalise his workers far more severely than he would criminals or political enemies for similar offences. It was only by use of an iron hand that Comrade Dzerzhinsky was able to preserve the Vecheka's good name and to achieve considerable successes in the war against counter-revolution.[117]

But the realities of the situation were such that Dzerzhinsky, for all his undoubted endeavours and selfless personal example, failed to

clear the Vecheka's name of the sinister aura it acquired, and it became a byword for wanton cruelty and corruption.

CRIMINALITY OF CHEKISTS

The task of the political police under a dictatorship is, at best, demoralising, and the dictatorship of the proletariat was no exception. Mindful of the notoriety attaching to the Tsarist Okhrana, recruits initially joined the Vecheka unwillingly and were loath to take part in the rough routine of searches, arrests, and interrogations; it was some time before they grew accustomed to the fact that, as Peters put it, 'revolution is not made in silk gloves'.[118] Latsis expressed himself similarly regarding Chekist duties: 'It is the dirtiest of jobs. You cannot do it in gloves.'[119] Not only did Vecheka work tend to corrupt Cheka novices, but it also inevitably attracted recruits of dubious character. Victor Serge, the high-principled Belgian-born Anarchist converted to Communism, painted an unedifying picture of the Chekists whom he observed at work in Petrograd:

> The only temperaments that devoted themselves willingly and tenaciously to this task of 'internal defence' were those characterised by suspicion, embitterment, harshness and sadism. Long-standing inferiority-complexes and memories of humiliation and sufferings in the Tsar's jails rendered them intractable, and since professional degeneration has rapid effects, the Chekas inevitably consisted of perverted men tending to see conspiracy everywhere and to live in the midst of perpetual conspiracy themselves.... By the beginning of 1919, the Chekas had little or no resistance against this psychological perversion and corruption. I know for a fact that Dzerzhinsky judged them to be 'half-rotten', and saw no solution to the evil except in shooting the worst Chekists and abolishing the death penalty as quickly as possible.'[120]

Naturally, not all Chekists were perverted: Serge himself said of Ivan Bakaev, Chairman of the Petrograd Cheka in 1919, that 'in the performance of his frightful duty he exercised an impartial will and a scrupulous vigilance';[121] maybe his vigilance proved excessive, for another observer learned that Bakaev was relieved of his Petrograd Cheka post owing to his 'too zealous use of summary execution'.[122]

The sort of depravity that gave the Cheka a bad name is illustrated by the case of P. Ia. Berezin, a Petrograd Chekist who, as early as January 1918, was judicially charged with the murder of a prisoner whom he had been interrogating. The case files were conveniently 'lost' during the court's evacuation, in March 1918, to Moscow, where Berezin continued his Cheka career, specialising in investigating speculators, and blatantly trafficking in confiscated goods. When Berezin was arrested and prosecuted by the Moscow Revolutionary

Tribunal for disposing of 200 confiscated bottles of spirits, Dzerzhinsky defended his character in court and contrived his release on a pretext. This scandalous case was reported in the press in December 1918, at the height of the public outcry against Chekist malpractices.[123]

In his treatise of 1921 on the Chekas, Latsis emphasised the need for Chekists to be men of the highest personal integrity, a standard which was by no means always attained:

> In order to have power over other people's lives, one must oneself be above all suspicion both politically and personally. Work in the Extraordinary Commissions requires people of self-controlled character, inflexible will, impartiality, firm political convictions and sound personal reputation. In the absence of these qualities, work in the Chekas soils people, turns them into feeble neurasthenics and swindlers. That applies to the normal recruitment of staff. But work in the Chekas, conducted in an atmosphere of physical coercion, attracts swindlers and outright criminals who, profiting by their Chekist employment, practise blackmail and extortion, filling their own pockets.'[124]

At the height of the Red Terror, insistent critics of the Chekas repeatedly referred to criminals serving as Chekists, an accusation the justice of which Peters was forced to concede in his press interviews and articles at this time.[125] Indeed, the *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin* of 13 October 1918 called for a purge of senior Chekists in the provinces:

> From all sides there are reports that not only unworthy but downright criminal individuals are attempting to enter the Provincial, and especially the District, Chekas. ... It is essential that the strictest selection of personnel be made for such responsible posts as Cheka chairmen and collegium members. Not merely non-Party but even dishonourable elements are trying to penetrate into such posts ... and by worming their way into responsible positions these characters undermine confidence in Soviet authority, in socialists; people are beginning to look upon us as *Okhranniki*. ... The self-purging of our ranks is the best way of dealing with such elements.'[126]

Six weeks later this admission was echoed in a resolution passed by the Second All-Russian Conference of Chekas, and printed by *Izvestia*: 'The Conference declares for all to hear that it severely condemns and demands merciless punishment for all Chekist workers and for all Soviet employees generally who have started out on the criminal path, fatal for Soviet authority, of licentiousness, personal gain, drunkenness and bribery; the Conference deems its immediate task to be a thorough purge of our community of all criminal elements, their severest punishment, and the drawing together of all Soviet workers.'[127]

Cases of extortion by Chekists, or by persons posing as such, from

relatives of Cheka prisoners[128] were so frequent that Dzerzhinsky placed an announcement in *Izvestia*, requesting that all such instances should be reported by the public to the Vecheka Chairman.[129] Sometimes these extortioners were caught and executed, but Dzerzinsky's appeal probably elicited little response because the intense fear which the Chekas inspired in the population discouraged complaints concerning Chekist actions.[130]

Matters were made worse by initial Soviet retention of some of the old Tsarist prison personnel,[131] a few of whom were still serving as gaolers several years later, having somehow escaped dismissal.[132] The new régime was sterner in its treatment of ex-Tsarist policemen, disenfranchising them under the Soviet Constitution of July 1918,[133] subjecting them to automatic arrest,[134] and excluding them from amnesties.[135] A rough and ready division into sheep and goats was practised: in early November 1918, the Tsaritsyn Provincial Cheka released 64 former policemen whose service under the Tsar had been brief, whilst sentencing 100 of their longer-serving colleagues to do forced labour in labour brigades 'until the final suppression of counter-revolutionary armed revolt in the Russian Republic'.[136] Under a Vecheka instruction of 8 February 1919, ex-Tsarist policemen could be released if their loyalty was vouched for by Party members, but if not, then they were to be transferred from prison to perform public work in concentration camps.[137] The Vecheka was less lenient with former members of the Special Department of the Tsarist Department of Police, of the Security Sections and the Special Corps of Gendarmes, these categories having constituted the 'Okhrana'. Such individuals featured on many a Cheka execution list, often among hostages. Despite many loose allegations that the Chekas were full of *Okhranniki* (to whom Chekists were constantly being disparagingly likened), there is scant firm evidence to indicate that the Chekas knowingly employed ex-Okhrana personnel; the exception that goes to prove the rule concerns a former Tsarist police official who was released and taken on by a Regional Cheka as a counter-espionage expert.[138] On the other hand, ordinary Tsarist policemen were occasionally to be found serving in the Chekas; in 1920, a writer, on a visit of intercession to the Odessa Cheka, recognised among the Chekists there several ex-members of the Tsarist police, besides two well-known pre-Revolution criminals.[139]

The Chekas had no scruples about using former Okhrana agents, well practised in the business of reporting on revolutionary organisations. One such Okhrana informer, a railwayman names Pavel Dyko, arrested by the Cheka for organising a rail strike, was recruited

in prison and released to report on Socialist Revolutionaries.[140] Another ex-Okhrana informer, a certain Nudel who had been a ballet critic under the pen-name Cherepnin, and who in Tsarist exile had informed against his exiled comrades, was used in prison by the Cheka to report on his fellow prisoners.[141]

ARREST AND DETENTION

Throughout its existence, the Vecheka enjoyed the virtually unrestricted right to arrest and detain by its own administrative decision, without any effective safeguard akin to *habeas corpus* operating to restrain its activity. As already noted, the Chekas had orders to behave correctly when carrying out arrests and searches; a typical instruction, dated 15 May 1919, ran: 'During a search [Chekists] must be persistent but polite, refraining from roughness and swearing.'[142] Things went differently in practice; an insight into Chekist behaviour on such occasions is afforded by evidence gathered by the Committee to Collect Information on Russia, which submitted an interim report to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1920, stating: 'The usual plan was to arrest prisoners in the middle of the night, and violence and threats were not infrequently used during the proceedings. ... Not only were arrests often accompanied by violence, but also by robbery and confiscation.'[143]

Despite Dzerzhinsky's assurance, given in his press interview of early June 1918, that the Cheka judged swiftly—only a day or two elapsing between arrest and verdict—the reality was otherwise; in practice prisoners could be, and often were, detained indefinitely, usually without being charged.[144] In a largely unsuccessful attempt to improve the procedure, in April 1919 Dzerzhinsky ordered that within five days of arrest a formal statement of the charge against the prisoner must be read out to him and his signature to it obtained.[145] A Rabkrin commission report on its inspection of Moscow prisons in April 1920 stated, in respect of the Butyrki prison, 95% of whose 1,569 detainees were confined by order of the Vecheka and M-Cheka, that 20% of the total 'were for the most part persons against whom no charge had been made and who had sat without trial for more than a year, or even two years'. The same Rabkrin report stated that 50% or more of the 679 detainees held in two specified forced labour camps were confined without any definite limit being put on their imprisonment; the Rabkrin commission recommended that about 60% of these prisoners might be freed.[146]

Although the VTsIK decree of 21 February 1919[147] set a theoretical time limit of one month on the Chekas' investigation of

cases, that limit could be extended by consent of local Soviets, and was in any case disregarded; a further safeguard prescribed that Revolutionary Tribunals should supervise Chekist investigative practices and check on conditions of detention of Cheka prisoners, but these measures were not implemented.[148] Besides illegally holding prisoners under investigation for indefinite periods, the Chekas also exercised their power to commit prisoners, by extra-judicial process and without right of appeal, to concentration camps and forced labour camps.

Prison conditions were lamentable: chronic overcrowding of cells, general filth which encouraged the depredations of lice, the most primitive sanitary facilities, and, inevitably—given the prevailing food shortages—hopelessly inadequate food rations. In these respects prisoners of the Chekas fared at least as badly as other prisoners; in addition, they were exposed to brutal interrogation, to the prospect of limitless detention, and to the ever-present fear of death, suspended over their heads like the sword of Damocles. Such is the overall picture revealed by the massive testimony of a whole variety of ex-prisoners of the Chekas. A number of repatriated British citizens who had been confined in Cheka and other prisons gave evidence on their experiences to the Committee to Collect Information on Russia, which observed:

> The conditions in all the prisons appear to have been very bad. Of the Moscow prisons about which we had most evidence, the Extraordinary Commission and the Butyrki were the worst. ... More than one witness has likened the prison of the Extraordinary Commission to the Black Hole of Calcutta. People were huddled together so closely that there was no room to lie or even sit down. ... The sanitary conditions in the prisons ... were painful and disgusting. In the prison of the Extraordinary Commission the provision of latrines was totally insufficient. Those existing were so filthy and the excrement piled up to such an extent that the prisoners were unable to sit down when using them. In the Butyrki, access to the latrines was only allowed three times in the twenty-four hours. At other times a tin in the cell had to be used. ... With regard to parasites ... 'verminous' was not a strong enough word to describe the conditions of the prison of the Extraordinary Commission. The lice were there by the million. ... The prisons were impregnated with disease, and no proper precautions were taken to prevent it from spreading. The healthy and the sick lay together; there was no general practice of removing the sick; they often died where they lay.[149]

The Committee had this to say regarding prison rations:

> Owing to conditions of semi-starvation prevailing in Russia, it would be unjust to criticise the food conditions in the prisons too severely, but the rations themselves were insufficient in quantity and of a quality so inferior as to undermine health. They varied in different prisons, but generally consisted

of a little warm water, and some black bread varying in amount ... from 1 lb to ½ lb per day downwards. This was supplemented from time to time by some watery soup, and on rare occasions by a little horseflesh.[150]

The principal prisons used by the Chekas in Moscow were: *Bolshaia Lubianka No. 11:* Vecheka HQ and prison, up to December 1920; thereafter used as Vecheka overflow prison; *Bolshaia Lubianka No. 2:* Vecheka Special Department (OO) centre and prison, up to December 1920; thereafter served as Vecheka HQ and prison; *Bolshaia Lubianka No. 14:* Moscow Cheka and prison; *Bolshoi Kiselnyi Pereulok:* Moscow Cheka's ancillary prison; *Butyrki Prison:* used by Moscow Cheka; *Lefortovo Prison;* and *Taganka Prison.*

In connection with arrest and imprisonment, the Chekas practised on a very wide scale many of the Okhrana's tricks of the trade, such as the use of stool-pigeons (*nasedki*),[151] some of these being women of good family—such as the notorious 'Baroness' imprisoned in the Lubianka,[152] and Nina Maslova, a nymphomaniac, held in the hospital of the Vecheka's inner prison, whose lover, Nikolaev, was a member of the Moscow Cheka's Collegium;[153] the turning of prisoners into informers (*sekretnye sotrudniki*, i.e. *seksoty*)[154] after extracting a written undertaking (*obiazatelstvo*) regarding their future collaboration;[155] the setting of a trap (*zasada*) in the apartment of an arrested man in order to catch his accomplices—all persons visiting the apartment, sometimes over a period of 7-10 days would be questioned and often detained.[156] The Cheka also had recourse to such mass methods, since made familiar by the Gestapo, as the street round-up (*oblava*)—throwing a cordon round a city area and hauling a dragnet through its streets in search of 'wanted' categories such as deserters, black marketeers, unauthorised possessors of firearms, etc.[157] That the Vecheka studied and drew on the expertise of the Okhrana, for instance regarding techniques of information-procurement through agents, was acknowledged in a secret document issued by the Odessa Provincial Cheka in February 1921.[158] A recent KGB defector has attested: 'It was not only the Cheka that made use of their [i.e. Okhrana] methods; they persist to this day, and are being extensively used by the KGB.' At training school KGB students studied Okhrana records, and were amazed to find how closely current KGB agent-running procedures, report-writing, etc., followed the Okhrana pattern.[159]

INTERROGATION AND TRIAL

A general pattern of Cheka interrogation practice emerges from the mass of available evidence. Interrogations were usually carried out

late at night and into the small hours of the morning, when the prisoners' vitality and morale, often already undermined by lack of sleep, a near-starvation diet, and the nervous tension caused by seeing fellow prisoners sent to execution, were at their lowest.[160] Both moral and physical pressures of various kinds were brought to bear on prisoners in order to prize confessions out of them.[161] Threats of violence against the prisoners' families were not uncommon.[162] Menaces were habitually used against the prisoners themselves in order to force admissions, or to obtain their agreement to become Cheka informers both in and out of prison:[163] a poll carried out among 150 political prisoners in Butyrki gaol during November 1920 to February 1921 established that 20 per cent of them had been threatened with death.[164] Sometimes prisoners were led repeatedly to execution in a bid to break down their resistance, only to be spared at the last moment, as happened to some prominent officials of Petrograd co-operatives: in their case the ordeal took the form of being led out at night as though for execution, and, after being made to strip to the last shred of clothing despite the intense frost, having to witness the real executions of fellow prisoners, before being returned to their cells, only for the macabre 'rehearsal' to be repeated a few nights later.[165] Many such harrowing incidents could be quoted.[166] It often happened that, to unnerve his client, an interrogator would aim his pistol at the terrified prisoner and discharge it close to his head. [167]

Normally interrogations were carried out by investigators (*sledovateli*) belonging to the investigation section of the legal department (*iuridicheskii otdel*) of a Cheka; it was their responsibility to prepare a case for submission to the Cheka Collegium, with an appropriate recommendation. The Collegium would meet in secret session to discuss completed cases and to pronounce a verdict on them by a simple majority vote. Unlike the People's Courts and Revolutionary Tribunals, these Cheka 'trials' had no formal procedure, no judicial rules; they were summary trials whose arbitrary decisions were arrived at in the absence of the accused and indeed without their knowledge. No witnesses were called, no counsel appeared for the defence.[168] The Cheka Collegium would sometimes pass judgement on a considerable number of cases at a single sitting, making it impossible for detailed attention to be given to individual cases. The minutes of such sessions laconically recorded the prisoner's occupation and/or the cause of detention, followed by the Collegium's verdict, without further commentary.

Summarised below is the outcome of several sessions of the Kiev Provincial Cheka:

19 May 1919: considered 31 cases: 26 death sentences, 5 released.
21 May 1919: considered 42 cases: 16 death sentences, 24 released, 2 set aside for further investigation.
5 August 1919: considered 57 cases, involving 73 individuals: 13 death sentences, 28 released, 15 to concentration camp, 10 for army service, 5 referred to NKIu for formal trial, 1 outlawed, 1 referred to Secret Department of the Cheka.[169]

The Kiev Cheka formed part of the All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission which, though nominally independent of the Vecheka, was in fact closely modelled on it and followed its lead; consequently the Kiev Cheka's proceedings can be regarded as representative of the conduct of Russian Chekas. As with the Kiev Cheka materials, so the documents of 1921 vintage of the Smolensk Cheka similarly reveal how Provincial Cheka 'trials' were conducted: the minutes of the Smolensk Cheka Collegium include a brief summary of each case and the sentence imposed, but do not mention any deliberation on the part of the Collegium; clearly most of the sentences merely confirmed the recommendations submitted by investigators.[170]

At times of crisis large-scale arrests and executions were sometimes carried out without logical motive, let alone any evidence of guilt; there was not even the semblance of a 'trial'. In late December 1918, when the Red Terror was raging, a frank account of the callousness and incompetence of a District Cheka was printed in the official NKVD periodical, *Vlast Sovetov*, written by a member of a joint Vecheka-NKVD inspection commission, following an inspection of the Soviet executive committee, Cheka, and Party organisations in Eletsk:

> After looking into the work of the Cheka, the latter's frightening irresponsibility and thoughtlessness became evident. Arrests and executions took place without any deliberations or resolutions. I could find no indication of the guilt of condemned individuals, since for the most part no records were kept of sessions of the Cheka Collegium, nor was there any investigation. I requested a list of those arrested; it emerged that many had been arrested simply because the chairman (Lyskovskii) had an intuition that these must be counter-revolutionaries, whilst the reason for the arrest of some others was not known to any of the Collegium members. ... As a result of acquainting myself with the materials on which the arrests were based, I, acting in concert with the Cheka, found it possible to release about 50 persons.[171]

Following this inspection, the Cheka Chairman was promptly arrested and confined in Orlov gaol.

Even when brief records of Collegium meetings were kept, as in the case of the Kiev Cheka, such sessions were often casual affairs, at which miscellaneous administrative business would also be discussed,

and Collegium members munched their meals while voting on issues of life and death.[172] When the Chekas were working at high pressure, the system of trial by Collegium might be replaced by Cheka summary courts consisting of three-man or five-man boards (called *troiki* or *piaterki*), whose proceedings were even more perfunctory.[173]

TORTURE

Officially, physical pressure was forbidden by the Soviet Government and, as already noted, in October 1918 the VTsIK Presidium even closed down the *Vecheka Weekly Bulletin* because in it a local Cheka had advocated the use of torture for extracting information from prisoners—a method approved in principle in an accompanying Vecheka editorial. Evidently there was a school of thought at Vecheka headquarters which accepted torture as a necessary means; certainly torture was widely practised by Chekists, however emphatically Peters might deny this.[174] In mid-1921, the Vecheka even reportedly issued a secret instruction authorising the application of 'the old and proven remedy' (a euphemism for physical constraint) to prisoners who resisted endeavours to elicit confessions from them.[175] Cruel physical pressure in the form of savage beatings often accompanied interrogation,[176] such beatings being habitually practised, for instance, in the Cheka's prisons in Kharkov.[177] But beatings were also applied by way of punishment or reprisal: in the case of a Cheka pogrom against Anarchists, Tikhon Kashirin, a workman arrested on 8 March 1921, was beaten up in the Vecheka inner prison until he lost consciousness.[178] It was common knowledge in Petrograd that Uritskii's assassin, Kanegisser, was tortured three or four times before being shot.[179]

Detailed accounts of Cheka torture abound in émigré literature. The three most comprehensive and best documented compilations of evidence concerning Bolshevik atrocities are: S. P. Melgounov, *The Red Terror in Russia*, London, 1925,[180] V. M. Chernov (editor), *Che-Ka, Materialy po deiatelnosti chrezvychainoi komissii (Che-Ka, Materials concerning the activity of the Extraordinary Commission)*, Berlin, 1922; and *The Denikin Commission Reports*. The Special Commission to Investigate Bolshevik Crimes was established on 11 December 1918 by order of General Denikin, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces in South Russia.[181]

The Chekas resorted to a wide variety of ingenious tortures vying with the methods of the Spanish Inquisition. Certain Chekas specialised in particular lines of torment: the Kharkov Cheka went in for scalping and hand-flaying; some of the Voronezh Cheka's victims

were thrust naked into an internally nail-studded barrel and were rolled around in it; others had their forehead branded with a five pointed star, whilst members of the clergy were 'crowned' with barbed wire; the Poltava and Kremenchug Chekas specialised in impaling the clergy (eighteen monks were impaled on a single day); also in Kremenchug, rebelling peasants were buried alive; at Ekaterinoslav victims were crucified or stoned to death, whilst at Tsaritsyn their bones were sawn through; the Cheka of Odessa put officers to death by chaining them to planks and then pushing them very slowly into furnaces, or else by immersion first in a tank of boiling water, then into the cold sea, and then again exposing them to extreme heat; at Armavir, the 'death wreath' was used to apply increasing constriction to victims' heads; in Orel and elsewhere water was poured on naked prisoners in the winter-bound streets until they became living statues of ice; in Kiev the living would be buried for half an hour in a coffin containing a decomposing body;[182] also in Kiev, the imaginative Chinese Cheka detachment amused itself by putting a rat into an iron tube sealed with wire netting at one end, the other end being placed against the victim's body, and the tube heated until the maddened rat, in an effort to escape, gnawed its way into the prisoner's guts.[183] Johnson, the Negro executioner of the Odessa Cheka, achieved special notoriety: he sometimes skinned his victims before killing them; after Odessa fell to the Whites in August 1919, he was caught and lynched by an angry mob.[184] Women executioners could be crueller than men: Vera Grebeniukova, known as 'Dora', a beautiful young girl who was a colonel's daughter and a Chekist's lover, was reputed to have shot 700 prisoners during her two-and-a-half months' service with the Odessa Cheka.[185]

The Chekas did not spare women and children. There are accounts of women being tortured and raped before being shot;[186] wives of prisoners were sometimes blackmailed into sexual submission to Chekists.[187] There were many cases of children between the ages of 8 and 16 being imprisoned; some were executed.[188] The Chekas were occasionally honest enough to admit that they practised torture: in February 1920, such an admission was made by the Saratov Provincial Cheka at a meeting of the Saratov Soviet, and appeared in the press.[189]

EXECUTIONS

Absent at their own Cheka 'trial', those condemned to death very often learned their fate only when, late at night, they were taken from their cells, and even then they were merely told to come 'with their

belongings'—which signified that they were required not for interrogation but for execution (if such a summons 'with belongings' came by day, it meant transfer to another prison, or possibly release).[190] Consequently, many prisoners lived in constant uncertainty and in fear of imminent death. Those condemned were stripped of their clothing and footwear and were relieved of their personal belongings, all of which were shared out among the executioners as their perquisites; executioners were also paid handsome fees in cash for every victim despatched.[191] Executions were habitually carried out in the prison cellars or courtyard, or else outside the town; in the latter case the victims, often bound hand and foot and gagged, were conveyed by lorry to the place of execution,[192] where they were sometimes made to dig their own graves.[193] They would then either be shot individually with a revolver, or else be mowed down with a machine-gun. Those despatched in prison were shot in the back of the neck as they entered the execution cellar, which became littered with corpses and wet with blood.[194] Alternatively, they might be executed in the prison courtyard, the sound of shooting being drowned by the prolonged revving of lorry motors.[195]

Mass executions occurred when hostages were slain in reprisal, as happened in Petrograd after the assassination of Uritskii. Drastic reprisals against hostages followed the Anarchist bomb attack of 25 September 1919 on the Communist Party's Moscow Committee headquarters, but since the responsibility was not traced to the Anarchists until later the hostages who suffered were of the 'bourgeois' variety. Dzerzhinsky came direct from the scene of the explosion to the Moscow Cheka and ordered that all Kadet Party members, ex-gendarmes, aristocrats, and other representatives of the *ancien régime* who were held in Moscow prisons and camps should be executed forthwith. Literally hundreds perished that night and on the following day, before the order was rescinded on the intervention of VTsIK and of the Communist Party's Central Committee. Most were shot, as was the custom, in the Cheka's prison basements. One overflow party of prisoners, sent from Butyrki gaol to be executed in Petrovskii Park, included A. A. Makarov, former Minister of the Interior and of Justice.[196] Many more hostages were put to death on this occasion in the provinces; in Saratov alone sixty bourgeois were shot.[197]

The Cheka also resorted to mass executions when its prisons were about to be overrun by White forces, as happened in Kharkov, Kiev, and Odessa in the summer of 1919. On 8 June 1919, in the course of two to three hours, a three-man commission sorted out 350 cases in

the main Cheka prison in Kharkov, and immediately proceeded to execute 79 detainees;[198] the same night a mass execution took place independently in the Cheka concentration camp in the city.[199] On the night of 26 August 1919, more than 420 Cheka prisoners were killed in Kiev.[200] In Odessa batches of 40 to 50 persons were executed nightly.[201] General Wrangel's break-out from the Crimea into the Kuban territory in August 1920 triggered off mass executions of Cheka prisoners in Ekaterinodar, where some 2,000 were reportedly shot round the clock in one day by order of Atarbekov, the Vecheka's plenipotentiary on the Caucasian front,[202] and at Armavir, where thousands more perished owing to Atarbekov.[203] Wrangel's defeat and evacuation from the Crimea unleashed a veritable holocaust of reprisals. Melgunov has described how the population of the Crimea was made to register and to fill in detailed questionnaires, which enquired into such matters as social origin; interrogation by the Chekas followed, and then the Chekas executed broad categories of persons such as former White Army officers and supporters of the Wrangel régime. The total number of Cheka victims in the Crimea at this time has been estimated as between 50,000 and 150,000.[204]

Ominously, Lenin, in a speech to a Party audience on 6 December, referred to the presence of 300,000 bourgeois in the Crimea, constituting 'a source of future profiteering, espionage and every sort of assistance to capitalism'; he promised that they would be subdued and dealt with.[205] A Crimean newspaper declaimed on 5 December: 'Too many White Guards remain in liberated Crimea. Now they have become quiet, hiding in corners. They await the moment to throw themselves on us again. But No. We pass over to the attack. With the punishing, merciless sword of Red Terror we shall go over all the Crimea and clear it of all the hangmen, enslavers and tormentors of the working class. We shall take away from them forever the possibility of attacking us.'[206]

Executions on the scale applied in the Northern Caucasus and in the Crimea to whole classes and categories of society deserve to be graded as genocide. One is reminded of the Russian saying which Latsis quoted *à propos* of diehard counter-revolutionaries: 'Only the grave cures the hunchback'—i.e. the only good counter-revolutionary is a dead one. Latsis went on to recommend: 'It is insufficient to isolate them [counter-revolutionaries] from the community, it is essential to destroy them.'[207] With such a mass process of execution operating in various parts of Soviet territory, inevitably mistakes occurred. There is frequent mention of prisoners being executed

through mistaken identity, simply because they bore the same or similar surname as a condemned man.[208]

It is not surprising that Chekist executioners, however hardened to their task, sought relief by stupefying themselves with liquor and drugs. It was common practice for executioners to be issued with special rations of vodka or wine to condition them for their next grim duty.[209] Many Chekists were sheer sadists or psychopaths, as in the case of the twenty-year-old chief of the Vologda Cheka who, in the winter of 1920, interrogated his prisoners while they were immersed in an icy river—eventually he was medically examined and pronounced insane.[210] In January 1922, a Hungarian female official—all too aptly named Remover—of one of the Kiev Chekas was arrested on a charge of having shot, without authority, a batch of eighty prisoners, mostly young men; she was found to be suffering from a sexual obsession.[211] There are references to the derangement of M. S. Kedrov; persistent rumour had it that, after the atrocities perpetrated by his punitive expedition in the Archangel region, he was committed to an asylum.[212] M. A. Deich, who, as chairman of the Odessa Cheka, had presided over wholesale wanton executions,[213] had to undergo psychiatric treatment in a sanatorium, having in addition become a cocaine addict.[214] As Bukharin recognised, personality disorders constituted an occupational hazard of the Chekist profession.[215]

Undoubtedly, many atrocities were also perpetrated by the Whites; in a civil war both sides engage in gratuitous cruelty. The *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* recites a catalogue of crimes committed in the course of the White Terror.[216] A striking phenomenon was the prevalence of Jewish pogroms, especially in the Ukraine, which was due, in W. H. Chamberlin's words, to 'the identification, in the popular mind, of the Soviet régime, or at least of the Communist Party, with the Jews. The latter consequently became scapegoats for all the unpopular acts of the Soviet régime, for the brutalities of the Cheka, for the suppression of private trade and the requisitions which were carried out at the expense of the peasants.'[217]

Intent on striking a just balance between the two sides, Chamberlin quotes some glaring examples of the White Terror, such as General Wrangel's order to execute forthwith 370 Bolshevik officers and N.C.O.s. As Chamberlin then remarks: 'Instances of White, as of Red, atrocities could be multiplied indefinitely; only a blind partisan would endeavour to deny that the Civil War ... was fought on both sides with extraordinary ferocity.'[218] Theodore Maly, a Hungarian chaplain taken prisoner of war who joined the Bolsheviks, recalled his service in the Cheka: 'We would pass burning villages which had

changed hands several times in a day. Civil war is terrible. Our Red detachments would 'clean up' villages exactly the way the Whites did. What was left of the inhabitants, old men, women, children, were machine-gunned for having given assistance to the enemy.'[219]

In mitigation of the terrible toll of lives taken by Lenin's régime, it has been argued that this was the inevitable price of revolution and civil war, particularly when waged in the aftermath of over three years of devastating conflict with the Central Powers. But, as the Socialist Revolutionary leader, Viktor Chernov, observed in a foreword to his party's publication on the Cheka, nothing could excuse the degree and totality of Bolshevik terror; after all, these same Bolsheviks who a few years back had shared Tsarist prison cells with Mensheviks and SRs, and who subscribed to the same socialist ideals—even if they differed on the means for their attainment—were now holding their fellow socialists in those very prisons, but in far worse conditions. Do not let the Bolsheviks, wrote Chernov, try to justify themselves by pleading that terror was forced upon them by the exigencies of their predicament; nothing could justify the Bolsheviks' return to medieval barbarity, their recourse to hostage-taking, torture, concentration camps, and mass executions. Under the Bolsheviks the state had become all-powerful, co-extensive with every domain of life: the collective was exalted whilst the individual counted for nothing.[220] And within that all-powerful state, the Vecheka operated as a law unto itself. Victor Serge witnessed how, already by 1919, the Cheka was fast becoming 'a State within the State, protected by military secrecy and proceedings in camera'.[221]

The examination, in this chapter, of the Vecheka as a terror machine, opened with Latsis's broad definition of it as being neither an investigative commission, nor a law court, nor yet a tribunal, but rather an administrative organ utilising the methods of all three agencies; it appropriated their powers without being bound by their rules. And indeed the Vecheka acted as policeman, gaoler, investigator, prosecutor, judge, and executioner, all in one. Nor was the authority of its subordinate echelons markedly restricted; Latsis, writing in December 1920, drew a revealing picture of the Provincial Chekas, which exercised powers of life and death over wide stretches of Soviet territory:

> The Provincial Cheka has the right to carry out round-ups, searches and arrests of individuals and organisations whose activity is directed against Soviet power. It has the right to impose surveillance over persons and institutions, to effect inquiry and investigation, and to apply sentence, being guided by Soviet decrees, by expediency and by revolutionary conscience. It

can punish crimes by imposing fines and by committal to concentration camp. Besides this, it is authorised to confine suspects in places of detention without time limit, notifying the Vecheka in each instance. Additionally the Provincial Cheka has the right to apply to the provincial Soviet executive committee for introduction of martial law in the province. In areas under martial law the Provincial Cheka is empowered to execute persons for specified offences.[222]

Clearly the Extraordinary Commissions, both central and local, accountable in practice to no outside superior authority save Lenin and the Politburo, virtually made their own rules as they went along, guided as they were solely by such flexible principles as expediency and revolutionary conscience, and by Soviet decrees which could be circumvented or simply disregarded, and which in any event were not notable for leniency or compassion. In the context of Cheka decisions, the law, as well as human life and human suffering, counted for very little. Symptomatic was Lenin's attitude on ethics, as proclaimed, for instance, in his speech on the theme of Communist morality at the Third All-Russian Komsomol Congress: 'Does Communist morality exist? Of course it does. ... We say that our morality is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class war waged by the proletariat. ... We say that morality consists in destroying the old exploiting society and in uniting all workers around the proletariat which is creating a new Communist society.'[223]

Communist morality, as preached by Lenin, became the morality of the Chekas. It found forceful expression in the first issue of *The Red Sword*, a weekly periodical of the Political Department of the Special Corps of Ukrainian Cheka Troops, published in Kiev:

> For us there do not, and can not, exist the old systems of morality and 'humanity' invented by the bourgeoisie for the purpose of oppressing and exploiting the 'lower classes'. Our morality is new, our humanity is absolute, for it rests on the bright ideal of destroying all oppression and coercion. To us all is permitted, for we are the first in the world to raise the sword not in the name of enslaving and oppressing anyone, but in the name of freeing all from bondage. ... Blood? Let there be blood, if it alone can turn the grey-white-and-black banner of the old piratical world to a scarlet hue, for only the complete and final death of that world will save us from the return of the old jackals.[224]

Chapter X

Organisational Development, Phase III: Proliferation (January 1919–February 1922)

> In this struggle the Cheka organs should become the weapon for the realisation of the centralised will of the proletariat, a weapon for the creation of discipline such as we have been able to establish in the Red Army.
>
> Lenin's speech on 6 February 1920 at the Fourth Conference of Provincial Chekas (Belov, pp. 370–1)

The year 1919 saw the Civil War flare up to its highest pitch of intensity, with dramatic fluctuations of fortune. Initially the Soviet forces were on the offensive, pushing into the southern territories vacated by the German armies after the collapse of the Central Powers in November 1918; Hetman Skoropadskii's German-supported puppet régime in the Ukraine having been ousted in mid-December by Petliura's nationalist forces, Petliura in turn was driven out by the advancing Red Army, which captured Kharkov on 3 January 1919, Kiev on 6 February, the port of Odessa on 6 April, and occupied Simferopol, capital of the Crimea, on 10 April. Thus Soviet rule was established over a large part of the Ukraine, where the All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission, the VU-Cheka,[1] was formed to deal with internal security problems. But in mid-May 1919, General Denikin, Commander-in-Chief of the White forces in southern Russia, opened a successful offensive in the Don Territory, and by the end of June he had captured Kharkov, Tsaritsyn,[2] and Ekaterinoslav;[3] from Tsaritsyn he issued on 3 July his directive for an all-out drive on Moscow. On 23 August, Denikin seized Odessa, took Kiev on 31 August, Voronezh on 30 September, and on 13 October reached Orel, within 250 miles of Moscow.

The Soviet régime was now critically threatened on three fronts: Denikin's thrust from the south, Admiral Kolchak in the east, and General Iudenich in the west. Admittedly Kolchak had been on the defensive in Siberia since June, but Iudenich's troops advanced to within sight of Petrograd, which Zinoviev considered evacuating.

However, this was the high tide mark of the Whites' successes: on 22 October 1919, Iudenich was repulsed in the suburbs of Petrograd, whilst in the south the counter-attacking Red Army recovered Orel on 20 October and drove Denikin progressively out of the Ukraine, recapturing Kharkov and Kiev in mid-December. Kolchak, too, was routed in Siberia, abdicating on 4 January as Supreme Ruler in favour of Denikin; soon afterwards he fell into Soviet hands and was executed in Irkutsk on 7 February. To compound the Bolsheviks' victories, on 16 January 1920 the Allied Supreme Council raised the blockade of Soviet Russia, bringing the policy of intervention to a close.

VECHEKA SPECIAL DEPARTMENTS (OOs)

Against this backcloth of events, the Vecheka was harnessed to the pressing task of holding the home front and maintaining security in the front line zones occupied by the Red Armies; as the military crisis mounted, so the size and scope of the Vecheka increased, despite the abolition of the District Chekas. An important role in this context was filled by the Cheka Special Departments (*Osobye Otdely*—abbreviated to OOs) which, replacing the unreliable *Voenkontrol* apparatus, were made responsible for internal security in the Soviet armed forces. The central Special Department at Vecheka HQ was established on 1 January 1919 by a joint Vecheka and *Revvoensovet* (Revolutionary War Council) resolution; however, the introduction of the Vecheka's new charter of responsibility for military security had to await Dzerzhinsky's return from his mission on the eastern front; on 3 January, he left Moscow as joint head (with Stalin) of the commission appointed by the Party's Central Committee and the Defence Council to investigate the causes of the surrender of Perm.[4] Returning to Moscow in late January, Dzerzhinsky signed on 3 February[5] a directive, adopted by the VTsIK Presidium on 6 February and published as a statute[6] on 21 February, concerning the introduction of the OO security system. The decree laid overall responsibility for security in the Red Army and Navy upon the Vecheka's Special Department, to be headed by a Vecheka Collegium member appointed with the concurrence of the *Revvoensovet*; the latter could propose its own candidate for the post (in practice it was held by a succession of senior Chekists: M. S. Kedrov from 1 January[7] to 18 August 1919,[8] next Dzerzhinsky himself until 20 July 1920, and then by Menzhinsky[9]). The Vecheka Special Department was to direct the counter-espionage and counter-subversion work of its subordinate OOs attached to military fronts and armies (OOs were

represented by OO commissars serving with divisions, regiments, and lower formations[10]) and to Provincial Chekas; OO-controlled intelligence agents were to operate across frontiers and in enemy-occupied territory. These various Cheka OO units were also charged, as was the central Special Department, to carry out assignments for *Revvoensovets* at their respective levels; OOs attached to Provincial Chekas carried out assignments for local military commissariats. OOs were authorised to conduct investigations, searches, and arrests; like other Chekas, they possessed right of execution under martial law or in cases of armed rebellion, though this power was not specified in the decree. Their budgets were borne by the Vecheka.[11]

The somewhat ambiguous balance of the OOs' double subordination to the Vecheka and the *Revvoensovet* was adjusted in favour of the latter by Defence Council resolution of 13 May 1919.[12] This statute placed OOs serving with fronts and armies under the direct command of appropriate *Revvoensovet* members, though still retaining for the central Vecheka Special Department the exercise of 'general direction of their work and supervision of their activities', thus ensuring that the Vecheka's security expertise would be available to the armed forces, whilst enabling Trotsky to integrate the OOs more fully into his command structure. But even this arrangement preserved a degree of exclusivity for the OOs, since they came under the political and not the purely military control of the supreme command. For, by a resolution of the Eighth Party Congress, held in Moscow on 18–23 March 1919, the Cheka OOs were subordinated to the Political Department of the *Revvoensovet*, which directed the work of the political commissars in the Red Army;[13] this department was formally established by *Revvoensovet* order dated 18 April 1919. A further *Revvoensovet* order, dated 26 May 1919, transformed the Political Department into the Political Administration of the *Revvoensovet (Politicheskoe Upravlenie Revvoensoveta*—abbreviated to PUR), which thus emerged as the *Revvoensovet* branch controlling the OOs.[14] The first head of PUR was Smilga.[15] PUR worked closely with the Party's Central Committee Secretariat;[16] nevertheless, the Red Army enjoyed a marked degree of political and security autonomy, in that its political branch, PUR, came under *Revvoensovet* authority, and not under direct Party control: the military command controlled both its political and security systems.[17] Correspondingly, the OOs, operating as they did largely under Red Army orders in the military front zones, exhibited a distinct independence of the Vecheka.[18]

The political commissars, acting under PUR control, discharged

important functions in the Red Army: they watched over the political loyalty of the officers (especially of the 'military specialists', who outnumbered officers of proletarian background)—but without interfering in their military duties unless treason was suspected; they were in charge of Party work in the Red Army; and they carried out political propaganda and educational work among the peasant recruits. Their overall task was to ensure the political loyalty and obedience of the armed forces to the Communist régime.[19]

The Party's considerable interest in the OOs was evident from the start. It was the Party's Central Committee which, on 19 December 1918, had taken the decision to form Special Departments in place of *Voenkontrol*. Within the Red Army the OO apparatus came under political control. And on 3 May 1919, as already noted, the Vecheka Special Department undertook to report once weekly to the Party's Orgburo.[20] It was, again, the Orgburo which, on 18 August 1919, appointed Dzerzhinsky himself to replace Kedrov as chief of the Vecheka Special Department.[21] This concentrated Party interest was due to the Party's need to be kept closely informed about the state of security and loyalty in the Red Army. In later years the OOs, serving as watchdogs of the dreaded political police (by then an instrument of despotic autocracy), intent on hunting down potential treason and disaffection in the armed forces, would earn the abiding hatred of the Red Army.[22] But that is another story.

The importance of the Cheka OOs was indicated by the financial allocation to them of one-third (1,500,000,000 roubles) of the total Vecheka budget for 1920 (4,588,200,000 roubles, exclusive of the cost of the Vecheka Troops).[23] Their importance was also reflected by the high-powered composition of the leadership of the Vecheka Special Department: as at January 1920, serving under Dzerzhinsky as chief of the Department were his deputy, I. P. Pavlunovskii, and four 'plenipotentiaries' of the calibre of Menzhinsky, Artuzov, Lander, and Agranov, with Yagoda in charge of administration and Gerson as secretary.[24] The Vecheka Special Department was responsible, during 1919–21, for the liquidation of major conspiracies against the Soviet régime, such as the National Centre, the Tactical Centre, and the Petrograd Combat Organisation (the Tagantsev Conspiracy); the military element in most of these conspiracies explained the Vecheka OO's special interest in them. Very many lesser instances of treason affecting the Red Army were uncovered by the various OOs. Special Departments in the field, wielding powers of summary execution under conditions of martial law, saw to military security in the front line zones of the Civil War and cleaned up in territory

wrested from the enemy. They also participated prominently in the suppression of peasant insurrections and other forms of 'political banditry', of which the Tambov Revolt and the Makhno guerrilla movement in the Ukraine serve as prime examples. On 20 December 1922, the central Special Department, then under the GPU, was awarded the Order of the Red Banner for the paramilitary exploits of its network. Among notable Chekists (besides those already mentioned) who served in the OOs were G. A. Atarbekov, V. A. Avanesov, Ia. K. Berzin, V. S. (or S. S.) Dukelskii, E. G. Evdokimov, and F. T. Fomin.[25]

SECURITY OF TRANSPORT

In the sphere of transport, the government reallocated responsibility for railway security by a series of statutes passed in late February 1919, offloading some of the burden on to the Militia. A Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Railway Militia was established, directed by a central Railway Militia Department attached to the Chief Administration of Militia (GUM) of the NKVD, with Provincial and District Railway Militia Departments functioning under the standard Militia Administration apparatus of local Soviets at provincial and district level. The Railway Militia, 'guarding the interests of the working class and the poorer peasantry', exercised the full rights and responsibilities of the general Militia, and was especially charged with the maintenance of security and order in railway zones.[26] At the same time special military units (regiments and separate battalions) of railway security, known as Railway Security Troops *(Voiska Zheleznodorozhnoi Okhrany)*, were formed for the external protection of railways and waterways, telegraph communications, military stores adjacent to railway stations, and trains with military freight.[27] The commander of these special troops was appointed by, and responsible to, the commander of the Central Administration of Military Communications *(Tsentralnoe Upravlenie Voennykh Soobshchenii)* under the *Revvoensovet*.[28] Thus there were three separate agencies involved in various aspects of transport protection: the Railway Security Troops under military command, the Railway Militia under the NKVD, and the Transport Chekas.

A Soviet River Militia was formally established by a VTsIK decree of 23 April 1919, under the direction of a department of GUM in the NKVD, with a network of River Militia Departments at provincial and district level.[29] However, the actual formation of the River Militia was temporarily postponed, whilst the existing troops for river security

(Voiska Rechnoi Okhrany) were put under the control and disposal of the Staff of Vecheka Troops.[30]

The Transport Chekas were directed to function in accordance with special instructions issued by the Vecheka.[31] Relations between the Vecheka, the Transport Chekas, and the Commissariat of Communications were regulated by a Defence Council resolution of 28 February 1919, whereby a representative of the Commissariat for War and a collegium member of the Commissariat of Communications entered the Vecheka Transport Department.[32]

In the spring of 1919, the Cheka transport apparatus was reorganised, being removed from its subordination to the Provincial Chekas and aligned with the NKPS structure.[33] On 11 May 1919, the Cheka Regional Transport Departments *(Okruzhnye Transportnye Otdely ChK)* were transformed into Area Transport Chekas (*Raionnye Transportnye ChK*—abbreviated to RTChK) and into Transport Chekas (TChK).[34] Either now, or later, the lower-level Transport Railway Junction Cheka sections *(Transportnye Uzlovye Otdeleniia ChK)* turned into Sector Transport Chekas *(Uchastkovye Transportnye ChK*—UTChK), for in 1920 we find already functioning, under the central Vecheka Transport Department, a two-layer system of Transport Chekas, namely Area Transport Chekas (RTChK) and Sector Transport Chekas (UTChK), these formations being the respective equivalents of Provincial and District Chekas. Their responsibilities extended along railway zones, often traversing several provinces.[35] In late April 1920, Dzerzhinsky introduced a further change, this time combining the posts of Provincial Cheka chiefs with those of RTChK chiefs; this was done to improve co-ordination of these agencies and, supposedly, to promote supervision over them by local Party and Soviet organs.[36] Latsis, writing in late 1920, observed that until recently the Vecheka Transport Department had enjoyed a considerable measure of independence of the Vecheka by reason of its close relationship with the NKPS.[37] Co-operation between the Vecheka and the NKPS was soon to be furthered by Dzerzhinsky's appointment in April 1921 as People's Commissar for Communications.

INTERNAL SECURITY TROOPS

As already noted, 35 Cheka battalions were reportedly raised by the Corps of Vecheka Troops by the end of July 1918, but in reality they had not been recruited to full strength (set at 750 men per battalion, i.e. 26,250 men) even by February 1919, at which time they still numbered only 22,000 men, serving in 35 battalions[38] (i.e. averaging

circa 630 men per battalion). By mid-March 1919, however, Vecheka armed strength had apparently reached 30,000,[39] and in June there existed 39 Provincial Cheka battalions, plus 1 Cheka regiment in Moscow and one battalion guarding Moscow concentration camps.[40]

Scarcely had Dzerzhinsky been appointed People's Commissar for Internal Affairs[41] than he set about combining the command of all auxiliary troops under the NKVD: on 30 March 1919, he chaired a Vecheka Collegium meeting which instructed Valobuev, Chief of Staff of Vecheka Troops, to prepare a Defence Council decree unifying control over all armed forces combating counter-revolution. Such a draft proposal was submitted, on 19 May, by Dzerzhinsky—in his dual capacity as Commissar for Internal Affairs and Vecheka Chairman—to the Defence Council, which set up a commission to finalise the proposal.[42] Hence it was essentially on Dzerzhinsky's initiative that, on 28 May 1919, the Defence Council passed a resolution (later classed as a decree)[43] transforming the Corps of Vecheka Troops into the Troops of Internal Security of the Republic *(Voiska Vnutrennei Okhrany Respubliki)*, generally known by their acronym as VOKhR. By this resolution, signed by Lenin, the Staff of Vecheka Troops became the Staff of VOKhR, and virtually all the ancillary armed forces attached to various state agencies were merged in VoKhR, under the NKVD, so as to promote centralisation and economy of effort. (Previously, since August 1918, such ancillary forces, although armed, provisioned, and trained by the Commissariat for War, had nevertheless stood at the direct operational disposal of their respective departments.)[44] The Defence Council resolution stated: 'All the ancillary troops (of special purpose) existing at the disposal of separate departments, institutions and organisations: *Narkomprod, Glavvod, Glavsakhar, Glavneft, Tsentrotekstil*, etc., with the exception of troops guarding the railways and frontiers, will, as from 1 June 1919, be subordinated to the *Narkomvnudel* [the NKVD] through the Staff of Internal Security Troops.'[45]

Of interest in this connection is the account of the above reorganisation published in the official NKVD bulletin. Commenting on the fragmentation caused by various governmental departments forming their own guard systems, the article noted:

> Eventually this departmentalisation of security assumed grotesque shapes. There were created 'sugar', 'oil', 'textile' troops, etc., etc. Worst of all, these 'special' guard forces did not so much guard as commit various abuses. This was especially in evidence in the sphere of railway security. Railway workers were, unfortunately, themselves often responsible for the theft of freight. And the guard force organised by railwaymen, maintained by and dependent upon

the communications department, not infrequently itself participated in thefts, protecting not the freight but the thieves. ... Thereupon the Chief Administration of the Militia, jointly with the Staff of Vecheka Troops, worked out a plan for merging the various special security forces (Food Supply, Sugar, Oil and other troops) under military discipline in one separate corps of troops of special purpose. These troops are subordinated to the NKVD, but their direct control and disposal has been entrusted to the Vecheka.[46]

Appropriately, the Staff of Vecheka Troops changed its name, first, by NKVD order of 16 June 1919, to Chief Administration of Troops of Internal Security (GUPVOKhR), and then, on 24 November 1919, to Staff of Troops of Internal Security *(Shtab Voisk Vnutrennei Okhrany)*.[47]

VOKhR troops had the responsibility of catering for the needs of individual departments; in particular, during the prevailing food crisis, they were required to reinforce units of the Food Army of the Commissariat of Food Supply *(Narkomprod)*, which in May 1919 numbered 25,000 men organised in 20 regiments,[48] and whose contingents enforced the collection of grain from the peasantry.[49] Under a statute of November 1919, VOKhR troops were also required to assist *Narkomprod*'s food-confiscation cordon-detachments operating on road, rail, and waterways.[50] Another prime task of VOKhR was to assist the Transport Chekas. On 18 June 1919, the Defence Council decided to introduce martial law on the railways, charging the Vecheka in conjunction with the Administration of Military Communications of the *Revvoensovet* and the NKPS to work out within a fortnight an instruction for the implementation of martial law. To facilitate this process, the first VOKhR sector was established on 18 June, for Moscow, followed by a whole series of other territorial VOKhR sectors.[51]

On 21 July 1919, the establishment and structure of VOKhR were approved. VOKhR troops were to consist of brigades, regiments, battalions, squadrons, batteries, etc. Eleven VOKhR sectors corresponded to the eleven existing Military Districts, with an allocation of one VOKhR brigade per province, consisting of four to six rifle battalions and one to two cavalry squadrons. In addition, each Provincial Cheka had one VOKhR battalion (previously a battalion of Cheka Troops) at its sole disposal, independently of local military and VOKhR commands. The commanders of locally stationed VOKhR brigades and sectors sat on Provincial Cheka Collegia. VOKhR troops were subject to the same conditions of service as the Red Army. On 21 October 1919, the *Revvoensovet* formed a Military Council of Troops of Internal Security to direct VOKhR; the Military Council

consisted of the VOKhR Commander and the Political Commissar, with Dzerzhinsky as the Council's Chairman. At Dzerzhinsky's request, on 2 April 1920 the NKVD Collegium ruled that the Commander of VOKhR troops should have the status of NKVD Deputy Chairman, and be a Vecheka Collegium member.[52] The first Commander of VOKhR troops was K. M. Valobuev (previously Chief of Staff of Vecheka Troops), succeeded on 16 April 1920 by V. S. Kornev.[53]

As at mid-1919, VOKhR troops, whose establishment had been temporarily set by the Defence Council resolution of 28 May 1919 at 120,000[54] apparently amounted to about 125,000 men; of this force, 40 battalions belonged to the Vecheka proper.[55] The strength of VOKhR troops fluctuated considerably, depending on the size of VOKhR's contribution for service at the front. Thus in early August 1919, the *Revvoensovet* began to form 6 regiments out of VOKhR personnel for the defence of fortified regions on the southern front; on 22 September, 14 VOKhR battalions were placed at the Red Army's disposal, followed by a further 3 regiments on 4 October. At critical moments VOKhR troops constituted a reserve on which embattled armies could draw; Dzerzhinsky stressed that one-third of VOKhR's strength should always be at the front. However, the Soviet Government saw to it that the basic core of VOKhR should not be too much depleted.[56] In late September 1919, the *Revvoensovet* decided to increase VOKhR's establishment from 120,000 to 165,000,[57] but a schedule of VOKhR battalions, detailing their deployment throughout 33 provinces as at early January 1920, shows their strength to have been only 104,042 men,[58] though that statistic may have omitted the prescribed proportion of one-third performing front line duty.

The numbers of VOKhR forces—and of Vecheka constituent troops—continued to fluctuate in the course of 1920: as at 1 May, Vecheka troops stood nominally at 26,022 (22,849 effectives; permitted establishment 36,184), out of a VOKhR nominal total of 161,744 (140,004 effectives; permitted establishment 220,212).[59] By mid-1920, VOKhR forces, having meanwhile absorbed by decree[60] the War Commissariat's numerous Railway Security Troops—except for those functioning in the military front zone, which remained under the War Commissariat's control—imposingly totalled 240,575 personnel, of whom 10 per cent were Communists[61]—twice as high a proportion as in the Red Army as a whole, where Communists constituted only 5 per cent of the Army's strength of 5½ million men in 1920.[62] However, another responsible Soviet source indicates that in the summer of 1920 the proportion of Communists in VOKhR stood

as high as 16.7 per cent.[63] These VOKhR forces consisted of troops: (a) available in support of the Vecheka, both centrally and locally; (b) guarding state enterprises and key facilities such as telephone installations; (c) guarding industrial bases; (d) guarding transport; (e) serving the Commissariat of Food Supply and its local organs;[64] (f) guarding forced labour camps.[65] Whilst being excused conventional garrison duties, VOKhR troops were sometimes assigned special defence tasks: following the Anarchist bomb attack on a Moscow Party Committee assembly on 25 September 1919, and the discovery of the National Centre military conspiracy, Dzerzhinsky ordered, on 16 October, the formation of two VOKhR garrison regiments for the internal security of the capital.[66]

Initially, political education in VOKhR was attended to by PUR. However, desiring to raise the level of political consciousness within VOKhR, the Vecheka Collegium obtained the Party Central Committee's consent to found a separate Political Administration for VOKhR, which was established on 21 October 1919, and functioned under the guidance of PUR. By a directive of April 1920 'concerning political education work among VOKhR troops', the post was created of Deputy Commander of VOKhR for Political Affairs, and co-operation was strengthened between VOKhR political commissars and PUR.[67]

The Commissar for War, Trotsky, did not wholly approve of VOKhR troops, evidently judging them ineffective.[68] In his telegram of 8 March 1920 to Lenin, he complained that he was unable to give direct orders concerning the formation of VOKhR units, as they fell into the NKVD's competence, and so whilst he disbanded the Red Army, transforming it into a regimented civilian labour force, here was VOKhR just as busily—but amateurishly—forming new units, 'putting premises and equipment to utterly unproductive use and repeating mistakes which we made a year ago'. To rectify this, Trotsky proposed that the formation of VOKhR units should be conducted by his Commissariat, the Vecheka being responsible for security screening of recruited VOKhR personnel. Trotsky conceded that, once these units were formed, they would stand entirely at the Vecheka's operational disposal, though remaining on the Red Army's strength as regards maintenance.[69]

SPECIAL COMBINED STAFFS

When key Soviet cities came under military—or internal security—threat during the Civil War, they would be put under martial law, and the Vecheka would step in to organise and co-ordinate security

measures. So it was that in the crisis-laden year 1919 the Vecheka's trouble-shooter, Ia. Kh. Peters, hastened from one menaced city to another, to see to their security defences. On 8 May 1919, he was given charge of the internal defence of Petrograd;[70] on 28 May, he was nominated chief of Moscow's special combined staff for combating counter-revolution;[71] on 23 August, he was appointed commander of the Kiev Fortified Area;[72] and on 19 October, Zinoviev and Trotsky requested his return to Petrograd, once more threatened by Iudenich.[73]

In Moscow, on 28 May 1919, Dzerzhinsky presided over a conference attended by senior representatives of the Vecheka, the M-Cheka, the NKVD, and the Moscow Party Committee; he stressed the need at that particular moment, when recent Red Army reverses might encourage the outbreak of counter-revolution in the capital, for the creation of a combined operational staff to co-ordinate the city's internal defences against possible insurrection. Peters was put in overall command of such a staff; the Moscow Cheka's OO and its Transport Department were stood on the alert; and the chief of staff of the Corps of Vecheka Troops was instructed to report on the state of Moscow's internal military defences.[74] During Denikin's offensive aimed at Moscow, by a decision of a special session of the Moscow Party Committee taken on 6 September 1919, Dzerzhinsky—as representative of the Vecheka and M-Cheka—was included in the *Troika*, i.e. the three-man Committee for the Defence of Moscow, charged with the implementation of measures connected with the imposition of martial law in Moscow.[75] At a later stage, on 20 October 1920, the Vecheka having obtained intelligence concerning an impending insurrection in Moscow, Dzerzhinsky himself was appointed chairman of the Committee for the Defence of Moscow and of Moscow District; the troops of the Moscow Military District were put under his command for purposes of internal defence.[76]

COUNTERING SPECULATION

From the outset the Vecheka had been charged with the suppression of economic malpractices, adding 'the combating of speculation' to its official title in December 1917, just a few days after its foundation, and forming a department for that specific purpose. Such departments were also instituted in the territorial Chekas. With the prohibition of private trade, and under a system of drastic state controls operating in a situation of acute shortages, a flourishing black market inevitably developed in various domains of the economy. The prevalence of profiteering was such as to defeat the combined efforts of the courts

and the Chekas; it was not until the New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1921 removed its causes that the phenomenon of speculation (i.e. private trade) virtually vanished, or rather was legalised. During the years of Civil War the Soviet state, cut off from its sources of grain in the Ukraine, of coal in the Don Basin, and oil in the Caucasus, subsisted on a siege economy; such staple commodities as bread, butter, meat, sugar, salt, etc., were in desperately short supply, and were consequently strictly rationed and sold at fixed prices. Unscrupulous individuals bought up scarce foodstuffs and other materials and then disposed of them on the black market at exorbitant rates. A byword in illicit sale and exchange was Moscow's Sukharevka market, which survived regular Cheka raids.[77] Methods favoured by the Cheka were the *oblavy*—mass searches in particular city areas which had been tightly cordoned off. Another common Chekist device was the use of *agents provocateurs*, posing as black marketeers to entrap the unwary.[78] The Chekas' haul of speculators was enormous: over the period 1 December 1918—1 November 1920 the Moscow Cheka alone arrested 26,692 persons for speculation.[79]

Meanwhile, on 22 July 1918, Lenin signed a decree on combating speculation, prescribing punishments ranging from six months to ten years imprisonment with hard labour and confiscation of personal property.[80] Trial and sentence were entrusted to People's Courts and Revolutionary Tribunals, but imposition of even harsher penalties became the extra-legal prerogative of the Vecheka: on 31 May 1918, the Vecheka sentenced to death, and promptly shot, the Cherep-Spiridovich brothers and their share-broker for selling industrial bonds to the German Embassy.[81] According to figures quoted by Latsis, during the first two years of their existence the Chekas executed up to 100 persons for speculation and 819 more for 'misappropriation connected with speculation', besides confiscating vast quantities of illegally traded goods.[82] It was also the Vecheka's policy to inflict big fines,[83] and to extort huge ransoms; in the case of the black marketeer 'cotton king' Poteliakhov, held in the Taganka prison, in November 1918, Dzerzhinsky noted that the Vecheka had offered to restore this speculator to his relatives in return for several million roubles' worth of cotton.[84]

However, the Vecheka's principal concern was with corrupt officials, who indeed caused the greatest damage; in his diatribe in *Izvestia* of 11 August 1918 against speculators who infiltrated Soviet economic and food supply organisations, Peters (then temporarily Chairman of the Vecheka) threatened them with merciless death.[85] Large numbers of such state employees, who exploited their access to

government stocks of goods for personal profit, were apprehended, and the Chekas of the RSFSR (or maybe of only 20 central provinces of the RSFSR) executed 217 of them in 1918 and 415 in 1919, if we are to believe figures quoted by Latsis.[86]

Towards the end of 1919, the Soviet Government took drastic measures to curb corruption among public employees. On 21 October 1919, Lenin signed a Sovnarkom decree[87] establishing a Special Revolutionary Tribunal, attached to the Vecheka, which alone was authorised to deal with a variety of economic offences committed by personnel in state enterprises—offences such as large-scale profiteering, misappropriation, forgery, bribe taking, etc.; the Tribunal's three members were appointed by the Vecheka Collegium, and its first chairman was Dzerzhinsky himself,[88] succeeded by his deputy, Ksenofontov.[89] The new Tribunal had sweeping powers; in the words of the decree: 'The Special Revolutionary Tribunal is guided in its judgements solely by the interests of the Revolution, without being bound by any forms of legal procedure. ... Its sentences are final and not subject to appeal.' Thus the Tribunal was a purely punitive and not a judicial organ, and operated summarily as was normal with the Chekas; its only concession to legality was that its hearings took place in open court. On 14 November, Dzerzhinsky opened the first session of the Special Revolutionary Tribunal with a speech emphasising the need for complete Soviet mastery over the country's entire economic apparatus, covering production, distribution, and transport; this involved keeping watch on 'specialists' and other class enemies who might subvert the Soviet economy.[90] In view of the ensuing decrease in major cases of corruption on the part of state employees, the Special Revolutionary Tribunal was abolished, either in July 1920[91] or, more probably, in March 1920,[92] handing over its responsibilities to the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal.

The same decree which established the Special Revolutionary Tribunal also appointed a Special Inter-Departmental Commission to function alongside the Vecheka,[93] with the aim of supervising and co-ordinating the systematic extirpation of speculation. The Commission was composed of representatives of the People's Commissariats for Food Supply, Justice, and State Control, the Supreme Council of National Economy, the Vecheka, and other agencies;[94] its chairman in January 1920 was the prominent jurist, Stuchka, ex-Commissar for Justice and future Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Court.[95] Subordinate Inter-Departmental Commissions, headed by chairmen of Provincial Chekas, were created at provincial level.[96] As was made clear by the chief of the central Inter-

Departmental Commission, in an *Izvestia* interview in December 1920, this organ, besides combating abuses in Soviet economic agencies, was also concerned to study their root causes, with a view to eliminating defects such as bureaucratic red tape and lack of inventory controls; the Vecheka would in future aim to promote 'the development and growth of the economic institutions of the Republic by means of appropriate supervision, and, when necessary, by bringing pressure to bear on one or another aspect of their work'.[97] Here the political police was clearly extending its role beyond a purely security function, and was seeking to use its coercive power in order to improve efficiency and boost production in the economic system.

Surprisingly, up to the autumn of 1919 only one man at Vecheka headquarters and ten Moscow-Cheka personnel were engaged in battling with speculation;[98] however, this leaves out of account the Vecheka's many branches in the provinces. A rapid mobilisation of Cheka resources followed on the economic front: on 1 October 1919, *Izvestia* announced, prematurely as it happened, the formation of a Vecheka Economic Administration[99] responsible for 'combating abuses and sabotage in institutions administering the national economy and the supply of food for the population of the Republic'. All instances of such transgressions were to be reported to 'the Economic Department' *(sic)* of the Vecheka.[100] In actual fact, it was not until 25 January 1921 that the Vecheka's Economic Administration was established, with N. V. Krylenko, Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Tribunal, as its original chairman.[101] Meanwhile, however, a Special Section *(Spetsialnoe otdelenie)* had been formed at Vecheka headquarters, dealing specifically with 'speculation, sabotage and misconduct in office' within Soviet organs and enterprises supplying the Red Army and Navy; this Special Section was in existence (as the Economic Administration definitely was not) in the Vecheka by mid-January 1920.[102] The general functions of the three earlier Vecheka Departments for combating, respectively, counter-revolution, speculation, and misconduct in office, were vested in the Vecheka's Secret-Operational Department, headed in January 1920 by Latsis.[103] There was a similar Secret-Operational Department in the Moscow Cheka.[104]

VECHEKA AND MOSCOW-CHEKA ORGANISATION IN LATE 1919/EARLY 1920

A useful key to the headquarters structure of the Vecheka and M-Cheka as at January 1920 is provided by the *Guide to Central and Local Institutions of the RSFSR, Party Organisations and Trade*

Unions (abbreviated hereafter to *Guide to RSFSR Institutions*), issued by the VTsIK Information Department in Moscow, and dated 22 January 1920.[105] The following picture emerges:

Vecheka (Bolshaia Lubianka No. 11)

Chairman: Dzerzhinsky. *Deputy Chairman:* Ksenofontov.

Vecheka Collegium: Latsis, Peters, Eiduk, Kedrov, Valobuev, Uralov,[106] Mantsev, Moroz, Zhukov, Avanesov, Fomin, Medved.

Secretariat *Records* *Signals Office*

Special Revolutionary Tribunal (Bolshaia Lubianka 11): Chairman: Dzerzhinsky.

Inter-Departmental Commission (Bolshaia Lubianka 14): Chairman: Stuchka.

Secret-Operational Department, Chief: Latsis. Functions: direction of work of Provincial Chekas in combating counter-revolution, speculation, and misconduct in office.

Investigation Unit,[107] Chief: Moroz. Functions: investigation of all cases arising at Vecheka level; action on appeals against verdicts of Provincial Chekas and OOs.

Transport Department, Chief: Zhukov.[108] Functions: direction of work of local Transport Chekas in combating counter-revolution, speculation, and misconduct in office.

Registration Department. Functions: recording of harmful elements.

Special Section. Functions: combating of counter-revolution, speculation, and misconduct in office in establishments supplying the Red Army and Navy.

Special Department (Bolshaia Lubianka 2), Chairman: Dzerzhinsky. Functions: combating of espionage, White-Guardist military conspiracies, and counter-revolutionary activities in the army, in central military establishments, and at the front; direction of Special Departments (OOs) in the army and at the front.

Moscow Cheka (Bolshaia Lubianka No. 14)[109]

Chairman: Dzerzhinsky. *Deputy Chairman:* Mantsev.[110]

M-Cheka Collegium: S. A. Messing, V. M. Nikolaev, N. A. Roslavets,[111] A. G. Gluzman, E. G. Evdokimov.

Secret-Operational Department, Chief: Messing. The Department's seven sections dealt with (1) speculation, (2) misconduct in office, (3) counter-revolution, (4) operational support, (5) intelligence pro-

curement, (6) supervision of stores in Moscow, (7) direction of Moscow area politburos *(raionnye politbiuro)*.

Investigation Department, Chief: Gluzman. Functions: investigation of persons under arrest, and passing of verdict on each completed case.

Administrative Department (Bolshaia Lubianka 7): Functions: provision of accommodation, repairs, heating, lighting, canteens, feeding of prisoners, custody of prisoners' belongings, etc.

Commandant's Department. Functions: protection of M-Cheka, issue of passes to visitors, receipt of correspondence and parcels for prisoners.

Information Bureau. Functions: dealt with enquiries about prisoners, issued passes to prison visitors, etc.

Special Department (Bolshaia Lubianka, Bolshoi Kiselnyi Pereulok 15); Chief: Evdokimov. Functions: combating of espionage, counter-revolution, and misconduct in office in the armed forces; included an office issuing passes for entry into the military front zone.

LOCATION OF VECHEKA AND MOSCOW CHEKA

From various sources[112] it is apparent that, as at January 1920, the Bolshaia Lubianka (subsequently renamed Ulitsa Dzerzhinskogo—Dzerzhinsky Street) accommodated a whole complex of Cheka and NKVD departments, and associated units:

Bolshaia Lubianka No. 2 This imposing building, which looked out on Lubianka Square as well as on Bolshaia and Malaia Lubianka Streets, had housed in pre-Revolution days the Rossiia Insurance Company and the shop of grain merchant Avanesov.	NKVD HQ and Vecheka OO, with its inner prison
Bolshaia Lubianka No. 7	Moscow Cheka Administrative Department
Bolshaia Lubianka No. 9 Previously this had been the Hotel and Restaurant Billo.	Barracks of Vecheka Battalion doing guard duty
Bolshaia Lubianka No. 11[113] Before the Revolution, this was the seat of the Iakor (Anchor) Insurance Company and of Lloyds Insurance.	Vecheka HQ

Bolshaia Lubianka No. 13 Formerly the seat of the Salamandra Insurance Company.	Vecheka Club
Bolshaia Lubianka No. 14 Once the house of Count Rostopchin, Governor of Moscow, and later office of the Moscow Insurance Company.	Moscow Cheka HQ and prison
Bolshaia Lubianka No. 18	Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal
Bolshaia Lubianka No. 22	Vecheka premises[114]
Bolshoi Kiselnyi Pereulok, adjoining the Bolshaia Lubianka.	Moscow Cheka's Prison Sub-Department (at No. 8) Moscow Cheka OO Battalion Barracks (in the Frank mansion)

VECHEKA HQ MOVES TO BOLSHAIA LUBIANKA NO. 2

In early December 1920, a reorganisation took place, involving an adjustment in accommodation. Vecheka HQ now transferred from Bolshaia Lubianka No. 11 to No. 2, taking over the notorious inner prison which had belonged to the Vecheka OO. The latter department was shrinking drastically with the ending of the Civil War and the consequent demobilisation of the Red Army.[115] The vacated premises at Bolshaia Lubianka No. 11 now served as an overflow unit for the Vecheka's inner prison. Bolshaia Lubianka No. 2, or rather Ulitsa Dzerzhinskogo No. 2 as it is now named, has since remained the hub of the vast Soviet political police machine, currently the KGB.[116]

ORGANISATION OF THE PROVINCIAL CHEKAS

An insight into the structure of the Provincial Chekas at this time is afforded by the Moscow Cheka organisational break-down outlined above, and by information from two other sources: the 'Chekist o ChK.' material and, especially, the 'Denikin Report'. The latter is an eight-page memorandum on the Vecheka and its territorial branches compiled, from data available in mid-October 1919, by the intelligence section of the Staff of the C.-in-C. of the Armed Forces in South Russia, General Denikin.[117] This account was undoubtedly based on information acquired by Denikin's forces in their advance through the Ukraine during the summer and autumn of 1919, and therefore reflects the composition of the Ukrainian (rather than the Russian) Provincial Chekas; the same applies to the 'Chekist o Cheka'

material,[118] which derives from the interrogation by Denikin's men of a captured member of the Kiev Cheka (Kiev fell to the Whites on 31 August 1919). However, the Ukrainian Chekas, directed in 1919 by Latsis, closely resembled those of the RSFSR, on which they were faithfully modelled. What follows is a composite picture of a Provincial Cheka, based very largely on the 'Denikin Report', supplemented and partially confirmed by other sources.

Provincial Cheka Chairman *Collegium* *Secretariat*

The Secret-Operational Department (Sekretno-Operativnyi Otdel) was divided into several sections, the basic ones being:

(1) The Secret Section *(sekretnaia chast)* or The Inspectors' Section *(inspektorskaia chast)*, staffed by inspectors responsible for combating counter-revolution, speculation, and misconduct in office, as well as crime, banditry, and espionage. This wide charter included such tasks as: continuous covert investigation of political parties opposed to the Communist régime (SRs, LSRs, Mensheviks, Bundists, etc.), and of counter-revolutionary organisations; intelligence reporting on the attitudes of the urban and rural population; awareness of the political sentiments of Soviet officials, etc. Inspectors usually specialised in particular lines of investigation, and made use of surveillance and agent-penetration facilities provided by other sections. The inspectors' task ended upon the arrest of their quarry.
(2) The Operational Section *(operativnaia chast)*, an operational support unit staffed by commissars responsible for carrying out (with assistance from Cheka troops and Militia) arrests, searches, and surveillance.
(3) Secret Agents Section *(sekretnaia agentura)*, responsible for running under-cover penetration agents against security targets. The Cheka also operated more conventional and casual, but still secret, informants.
(4) Registration Bureau *(registratsionnoe biuro)*, which maintained records of unreliable or harmful elements, each such individual being carded. There were four types of cards: suspects, wanted persons, those under arrest, and those already shot.
(5) Control of area politburos, attached to local Militia administrations.[119]

The Legal Department (Iuridicheskii Otdel) dealt with cases after covert investigation and arrest had been effected by the Secret-Operational Department. Its task was to complete the investigation,

by interrogation and other means, and to present the case, with appropriate recommendation, to the Provincial Cheka's Collegium for final verdict and sentence.[120]

The Administration and Finance Department

The Instructional Department (Instruktorskii Otdel) recruited and trained staff for all departments of the Cheka, and was responsible for establishing and inspecting its subordinate agencies. Its instructors reported on political conditions in the area visited, class composition of the local population, presence of Communist or other political organisations, existence and party composition of local Soviet organs, existence of People's Courts and Revolutionary Tribunals, presence of military formations—their political attitude, conduct, and discipline. Finally, they reported on the local Cheka under inspection: its party composition, effectiveness, any deficiencies, the instructions issued by it, how far it had registered the haute-bourgeoisie, Tsarist ex-officers, former gendarmes, etc., etc.[121]

The Commandant's Office (Komendatura) was responsible for physical protection of the Cheka, for guarding its prison, for carrying out executions, etc.

Special Department (Osobyi Otdel), forming an integral part of the Provincial Cheka, attended to the security of troops stationed within that Cheka's territory.[122]

Cheka Support Troops—the Provincial Cheka had at its disposal one battalion of infantry, a machine-gun platoon, and armoured cars or cavalry.[123] A special detachment was available to help guard the prison, carry out arrests, etc.

CHEKA REORIENTATION FROM MILITARY TO ECONOMIC SECURITY TARGETS

After the storms of 1919, the start of 1920 brought a temporary lull. By mid-January the Vecheka even felt strong enough to dispense—albeit only partially and briefly, as we have seen—with the death penalty, a measure of restraint which was also applied to the Revolutionary Tribunals, though not to the Revolutionary Military Tribunals functioning in the military front zones. The achievements of the Vecheka in maintaining order and security on the internal front were rewarded the same month by the bestowal upon its Chairman, Dzerzhinsky, of the Order of the Red Banner.[124]

The transition from conditions of military to those of economic crisis was the keynote of the Fourth Conference of Chekas which met

in Moscow on 3–6 February 1920; the seventy-six delegates represented the Provincial Chekas and their Transport and Special Departments (OOs).[125] In his opening speech Dzerzhinsky laid stress on the following factors: organised counter-revolution had been smashed, though not wholly eradicated, hence the immediate need for application of terror had passed; economic problems were paramount, such as the restoration of railway transport—'an issue of life and death', and protection of the economic apparatus against subversive bourgeois elements and foreign spies. Consequently, the Vecheka's Secret-Operational Department must be reconstructed, and its attention focused on the organs of production, distribution, and transport, and on combating the capitalist evil of speculation. Organisationally it was vital for the Provincial Chekas to establish close contact with VOKhR in view of expected *kulak* resistance to the impending introduction of labour conscription.[126]

THE RAILWAY TRANSPORT CRISIS

In matters of transport, efficiency now had clear precedence over security. A Defence Council resolution of 16 January 1920 defined the Vecheka Transport Department's duties as being: (a) to combat malicious or organised counter-revolution, sabotage, and speculation on the railways; (b) to carry out assignments set by the railway administration; (c) to keep the NKPS informed about conditions affecting operation of transport. Strict limitations were placed on the powers of Transport Chekas; these were authorised to arrest railway personnel solely with prior NKPS agreement, except in cases of blatant transgressions—but even then NKPS commissars had discretion to release offenders. The NKPS had a say in senior Transport Cheka staff appointments.[127]

The extent of the transport crisis was emphasised in Lenin's speech to the Cheka Conference on 6 February: owing to the ravages of war and to the snows of winter the railway system was threatened with a complete stoppage, and bread supplies in Moscow sufficed for only three days; it was essential that Transport Chekas assist in overcoming this catastrophe.[128] Dzerzhinsky acceded to a request, made on 2 February by the Defence Council, that the Vecheka should temporarily assign a number of responsible and dedicated Chekists to tackle the transport crisis under the direction of the NKPS.[129] A decree, signed by Lenin on 5 March, obliged ex-railwaymen, whatever their current occupation, to return to the railways, an exception being made for chairmen of Area- and Sector-Transport Chekas, their deputies, and grade one Transport Cheka Commissars.[130]

Meanwhile, under a Defence Council resolution signed by Lenin on 23 January 1920, the Vecheka's capacity to combat the transport crisis was increased by the transfer from the Commissariat for War into the competence of VOKhR (which stood in effect under Vecheka control) of all the former's Railway Security Troops, except those guarding railways in the military front zone. VOKhR was to form these troops into regiments and battalions, serving under the command of a VOKhR Deputy Commander assisted by two deputies, one representing the Vecheka Transport Department, and the other directing the Railway Militia, with both of which agencies the VOKhR Railway Security Troops were to co-operate closely.[131]

THE MILITIA

In mid-June 1920, a VTsIK decree[132] militarised the whole of the NKVD's Militia, conferring upon it the status of 'armed units of special purpose', which units could, in case of need, be integrated into the Red Army. The June decree stipulated that, whilst service in the Militia was voluntary, it should be of at least one year's duration, and that militiamen—who should be over 21, literate, and free of criminal record—must be subject to strict discipline under conditions of service akin to those obtaining in the Red Army. Several categories of Militia were listed: (a) city and district, (b) industrial, (c) railway, (d) waterway, (e) criminal investigation. These branches all came under the Chief Administration of the Militia, which was headed by an NKVD Collegium member. Territorially, Militias were subordinated to departments of administration within executive committees of Soviets at provincial, district, and city level.

VOKhR BECOMES VNUS

Aiming at rationalisation, on 1 September 1920 the Defence Council opted for a new single system of Internal Service Troops *(Voiska Vnutrennei Sluzhby)*, known as VNUS, which now absorbed VOKhR forces and all other ancillary troops responsible for internal security and guard duties, including the Railway and Waterway Militias.[133] At this point Cheka armed forces, forming part of VOKhR, numbered 43,829 men (23,315 below establishment).[134] The commander of VNUS, V. S. Kornev (previously commanding officer of VOKhR), received this new appointment on 6 September 1920; he was subordinated both to the Commissar for Internal Affairs and to the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army,[135] but in essence VNUS came under NKVD (and effectively under Vecheka) control, as VOKhR had done. Simultaneously, steps were being taken to reinforce those

VNUS constituent troops which belonged to the Vecheka; as at 1 December 1920, they amounted to 68,322 personnel.[136] VNUS forces are reported to have totalled 17 divisions and 14 detached brigades.[137]

VECHEKA TROOPS

Shortly afterwards came another reorganisation: as part of a reduction and streamlining of Soviet armed forces following the conclusion of the Civil War, as well as their redeployment against the insurgency threat, on 19 January 1921 a Defence Council resolution, signed by Lenin,[138] dissolved VNUS, whose troops were now transferred from NKVD competence to wholly military *(Revvoensovet)* command—except for the Railway and Waterway Militias which, together with all units serving the Vecheka, were detached from VNUS and constituted as Vecheka Troops *(Voiska VChK)* under entirely independent Vecheka control, exercised through the Staff of Vecheka Troops. The Vecheka Troops were made responsible for frontier protection[139] and for security of railway stations and anchorages. The recruiting and provisioning of the Vecheka Troops lay with the Commissariat for War, but these Troops were carried on the establishment and budget of the Vecheka, which decided their numerical strength in consultation with the *Revvoensovet*, subject to confirmation by the Defence Council.

A Vecheka directive of 29 January 1921, signed by Dzerzhinsky and by Yagoda,[140] described the Vecheka Troops as consisting of three elements: troops serving the local Chekas and standing at their exclusive disposal; Special Departments (OOs) attached to Red Army formations; and Special Departments for Frontier Protection *(Osobye Otdely po okhrane granits)*. The Railway and Waterway Militias made up a fourth element, directed by an Administration of Railway and Waterway Militias under the Staff of Vecheka Troops. Vecheka Troops stationed in other Republics, in Autonomous Republics of the RSFSR, and in outlying territories, were doubly subordinated: to the Vecheka plenipotentiary representative in the Republic or territory concerned, and, through their local commanding officer, to the Commander of Vecheka Troops of the Russian Republic—a post to which V. S. Kornev was now appointed. The system of Vecheka plenipotentiary representatives was by then already in existence: in April 1920, Dzerzhinsky had sent Collegium member Gleb Bokii to Tashkent as the Vecheka's plenipotentiary representative for Turkestan, in which post Bokii was succeeded in late August 1920 by

Ia. Kh. Peters.[141] G. A. Atarbekov had similarly been posted to Azerbaijan, following Soviet occupation of that country in 1920.[142]

By mid-July 1921, the Staff of Vecheka Troops had been renamed the Administration of Vecheka Troops *(Upravlenie Voisk VChK)*. A detailed Vecheka directive of 10 July[143] specified that, in addition to the individual battalions attached to Provincial Chekas, and the Special Departments attending to the security of the Red Army and of the frontiers, other Vecheka Troops, constituted as numbered detachments of special purpose, stood at the sole disposal of the Vecheka and of its designated representatives. The Vecheka exercised total control over all its armed forces, being responsible for their financing, training, discipline, political education, deployment, and direction, but not for their recruitment and equipment. No other department was entitled to make use of Vecheka Troop units without express Vecheka authorisation, nor were these Troops liable for garrison duties. Political education was carried out by political secretariats subordinated to the Political Secretariat of the Administration of Vecheka Troops; such political secretariats worked in close association with, but not under the control of, the Political Administration of the *Revvoensovet* (PUR). Possibly this stress on independence of the Vecheka's armed forces reflected the Soviet régime's distrust, or at least a new-found wariness, of the Red Army's and Navy's loyalty and morale following the traumatic experience of the Kronstadt mutiny.

By the late summer of 1921, the Vecheka Troops (excluding Frontier Troops) reportedly totalled 137,106.[144] However, in December 1921, a joint Defence Council and VTsIK decree[145] abolished the Railway and Waterway Militias, transferring their functions and personnel—numbering 47,470—to the People's Commissariat for Communications (NKPS, which Dzerzhinsky headed since April 1921) and the Vecheka. The Vecheka continued to be responsible for security and suppression of crime at railway stations and anchorages, whilst the NKPS inherited responsibility for safeguarding freight, stores, and installations, for which purpose it was instructed to form the necessary guard services. The War Commissariat retained responsibility for defence of communication routes and military installations of strategic importance.

CHON

A separate system of élite troops, known as Detachments of Special Purpose *(Chasti Osobogo Naznacheniia*—abbreviated to CHON), had emerged in mid-1919 in consequence of a Party Central

Committee resolution, published in *Pravda* on 23 April 1919, calling for the urgent mobilisation of all Party resources for the defence of the Revolution.[146] These CHON troops were mainly used for guarding key political, economic, and military installations, for suppressing counter-revolutionary risings, for assisting Cheka operations, and for giving combat support to the Red Army; CHON personnel also operated, on Party instructions, in enemy-occupied territory, organising underground activity and partisan warfare.[147]

CHON detachments were recruited from Party and Komsomol members and candidate-members, between the ages of 17 and 55. Overall command lay with the Party, whose Central Committee exercised co-ordinating control, whilst local Party direction operated through CHON Councils *(Sovety CHON)* at republic, military region, provincial, and district level. In 1921, the Party Central Committee endorsed its regulation of 1919 concerning CHON, and it was not until 1924 that this Party military apparatus was disbanded.[148]

For a short while, as from early February 1920, responsibility for CHON rested with *Vseobuch*, the Red Army General Staff's directorate for military training.[149] CHON and Cheka formations fought side by side in suppressing nationalist revolts and peasant risings, such as the Tambov insurrection of 1920–1. However, in practice, mobilisation of Party members for emergency service in CHON inevitably led to confusion and conflict, particularly as regards conscription of Communists already serving in the Red Army, the Chekas, and the Militia. A Party instruction therefore directed that these categories would only be required for CHON duty in circumstances of dire necessity, i.e. in stage 3 of the CHON mobilisation plan.[150]

THE FRONTIER TROOPS

With the ending of the Civil War and the consequent stabilisation of the Soviet state's frontiers, their peace-time protection became an important issue. Hitherto the Frontier Chekas (about whose existence during 1919–20 information is curiously lacking)[151] had been cast in a supporting role, the main responsibility for guarding the borders falling on the Frontier Troops *(Pogranichnye Voiska)* which, whilst forming part of the Red Army structure, were functionally subordinated to the *Narkomvneshtorg* (People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade). In practice, in the ebb and flow of Civil War there were few fixed frontiers, and the Cheka OOs acted as the Red Army's watchdogs in the front zones, issuing passes to persons entering or leaving those front zones.[152] But now, as the RSFSR consolidated its

territorial hold and signed treaties with neighbouring states, a requirement arose for a regular system of frontier protection. On 19 March 1920, the Defence Council, chaired by Lenin, considered special measures for strengthening the frontiers,[153] and on 14 July 1920 it requested the *Revvoensovet* to produce, without delay, troops for guarding the White Sea, Estonian, and West Siberian borders, and to continue making further frontier forces available as strategic conditions might dictate.[154]

On 15 October 1920, the Party Central Committee appointed a commission, under Dzerzhinsky's chairmanship, to work out measures designed to strengthen the security of the state's periphery.[155] And on 24 November 1920, the Defence Council passed a resolution establishing a Vecheka Special Department for the Protection of Frontiers *(Osobyi Otdel po okhrane granits)*, responsible for guarding all the Republic's frontiers against political and military espionage, against smuggling, and against banditry in the frontier zones. For implementation of this measure, the Frontier Troops were now transferred from the armed forces into the command of VNUS, and were placed at the disposal of the Vecheka. Pursuant thereto, on 30 November 1920, Menzhinsky, as chief of the Vecheka Special Department for Frontier Protection, and Lezhava, the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, signed an order transferring border security functions from *Narkomvneshtorg* to the Vecheka.[156]

There followed, on 15 January 1921, a conference chaired by Dzerzhinsky, and attended by S. S. Kamenev (Red Army C.-in-C.), M. N. Tukhachevskii, and I. S. Unshlikht, concerning the formation of further Frontier Troops. The conference set the total strength of the Frontier Troops at approximately 100,000, of which not less than one-fifth should consist of cavalry, and which should also contain the necessary element of maritime and river patrol forces.[157]

When, on 19 January 1921, by decision of the Defence Council, Vecheka Troops were formally established as an entity independent of VNUS, they were allotted, *inter alia*, responsibility for frontier protection and took over the Frontier Troops from VNUS. A consequent Vecheka instruction was signed by Kornev, as commander of Vecheka Troops, and by Permakov, as his chief of staff.[158] On 15 February 1921, Dzerzhinsky issued an order to Vecheka border detachments guarding Soviet frontiers;[159] this date has been accepted, and its anniversary celebrated, as the foundation date of the Soviet Frontier Troops, even though these troops had by then already been formed and had even gained battle experience.[160] By the summer of

1921, just under 95,000 Vecheka Troops were reportedly already deployed on border guard duty.[161]

However, a further variation in the subordination of Frontier Troops occurred in October 1921; in order to combat more effectively the paramilitary menace posed by Savinkov's and Petliura's trans-border raiding parties launched from Polish territory, by the Basmachi rebellion in Central Asia, by White Finnish military incursions into Soviet Karelia, and the like, the Defence Council ordained on 21 October 1921 that the Frontier Troops should be transferred from Vecheka control once more into the Red Army's command. The Vecheka remained responsible, through its Special Departments for Frontier Protection, for the political and economic safeguarding of the frontiers, but their military defence was entrusted to the Red Army. In due course the external threat was eliminated by military methods, but was replaced by the more insidious and elusive danger of enemy agents and contraband runners operating across the frontiers. Adapting to changed conditions, on 27 September 1922 the Defence Council again decided to make the political police, now reincarnated in the GPU, responsible for total protection of the frontiers, establishing a Separate Frontier Corps for that purpose, under GPU direction.[162]

Meanwhile, on 10 November 1921, Lenin, as Chairman of the Sovnarkom, instructed Unshlikht (by now Deputy Chairman of the Vecheka) to call a meeting of People's Commissars for Foreign Trade, War, and Internal Affairs, in order to examine the problem of contraband traffic.[163] This led to the passing, on 8 December 1921, of a decree establishing a Central Commission for Combating Contraband, attached to the Vecheka and consisting of representatives drawn from the Vecheka, the *Revvoensovet*, and the *Narkomvneshtorg*. Similar commissions in miniature were attached to Cheka Special Departments for Frontier Protection, being composed of local representatives of the military, of the *Narkomvneshtorg*'s Customs Service, and of the Cheka, under the Cheka's chairmanship. These commissions were to supervise the implementation of measures against smuggling, and, where offences occurred, to submit cases for prosecution by Provincial Revolutionary Tribunals, which were entitled to inflict the death penalty and were encouraged to impose sentences of not less than three years' imprisonment in strict isolation.[164]

VECHEKA ORGANISATION IN 1921

We have no detailed official description of the Vecheka's central organisation as at 1921, after the end of the Civil War proper and before its transformation into the GPU; indeed it is difficult to pin down precisely the Vecheka's structure at any given moment, seeing that one of its salient characteristics, throughout its history, was its organisational flexibility—and hence, fluidity.[165] Menzhinsky wrote of Dzerzhinsky that 'he constantly broke up and reorganised the Cheka, time and time again reviewing its personnel, structure and methods, fearful above all lest the Cheka-GPU be caught up in bureaucratic red tape, paperwork, soullesness and routine'.[166] Nevertheless, we can attempt a reconstruction of the Vecheka in its final period, basing ourselves on Latsis's account of it at the turn of 1920/1, supplemented by evidence from other sources. The broad structural outline of the Vecheka is indicated in Latsis's historical survey, *The Extraordinary Commissions for Combating Counter-Revolution*, published in 1921; in it Latsis depicted the Vecheka's headquarters organisation as divided into three groups of departments, each group being headed by an 'administration' *(upravlenie)*.[167] These administrations, emerging in 1920 or early 1921,[168] represented a logical organisational development, dictated by the need to impose a more compact central control over the increasing number of departments in the vast Vecheka apparatus.

(1) *The Administrative-Organisational Administration* was concerned with personnel management, with administration and finance, inspection, supervision and training, and with general guidance of the Vecheka's subsidiary organs in the provinces.

(2) *The Secret-Operational Administration* included responsibility for combating counter-revolution and similar crimes, for recording hostile or suspect elements, for security of transport, military security and counter-espionage, etc.

(3) *The Economic Administration* dealt with economic offences such as profiteering, and with misconduct of officials in the state economy.

This last administration, established on 25 January 1921,[169] traced its descent from the Vecheka's early Departments for Combating Speculation and Misconduct in Office, both of which later formed part of the Secret-Operational Department; it also evolved out of the Vecheka's Special Section, already in existence by January 1920,[170] whose task it was to root out economic crime in departments supplying the armed forces. The Economic Administration expanded with the advent of NEP. When, in August 1921, Lenin signed a new

decree on bribery,[171] responsibility for its implementation was assigned to the Vecheka.[172] But the Vecheka did not limit itself to hunting down bribery, corruption, espionage, and sabotage in the economic field; it seemingly aspired to the mission of supervising the performance of the state's commercial and industrial establishments, looking for deviations from set regulations and for non-fulfilment of economic targets. As an instance of the Vecheka's economic watchdog role, we find a special high-level three-man committee, consisting of Eiduk, Peters, and Avanesov, monitoring the work of the VSNKh's Central Timber Committee, surrounding its 'specialists' with spies, compiling dossiers on their activities and contacts, and threatening them with execution if they failed in their duties. The VSNKh Chairman, Rykov, defended his personnel as best he could, and complained to Lenin about their harassment by the Vecheka.[173]

The Secret-Operational Administration (Sekretno-Operativnoe Upravlenie) was central to the Vecheka's purpose; it discharged a wide range of duties, and directed a number of key departments:

(a) *The Secret Department (Sekretnyi Otdel)* investigated political opposition parties and groups—a function previously possessed by its predecessors, first the Department for Combating Counter-Revolution and then the Secret-Operational Department.[174] A section of the Secret Department dealt with the clergy.[175] Later, under the OGPU, the Secret Department would also deal with deviations within the Communist Party.[176]

(b) *The Information Department (Informatsionnyi Otdel)* kept a close check on the population at large through a host of secret informants *(sekretnye osvedomiteli)* who infiltrated every sphere of society.[177]

(c) *The Operational Department (Operativnyi Otdel)* was responsible for physical surveillance and, through its Commandant's Office section, for effecting searches, arrests, and executions.[178]

(d) *The Counter-Espionage Department (Kontr-Razvedyvatelnyi Otdel*, known as KRO) came into existence in, or about, 1921, its aim being to combat espionage and subversive activity directed from abroad. In particular it achieved remarkable penetration of Russian émigré organisations which, with foreign support, were endeavouring to establish intelligence-gathering and politically subversive networks within the Soviet state.[179]

(e) *The Foreign Department (Inostrannyi Otdel*, known as INO), was reportedly formed by Dzerzhinsky's order of 20 December 1920.[180]

INO directed intelligence work abroad, where it was represented by Chekists serving under cover of official appointments in Soviet diplomatic and commercial missions. In 1921, INO was also responsible for operations against foreign diplomatic establishments in Russia,[181] but in 1922 this function was transferred to KRO.[182]

(f) *The Transport Department* directed a network of Transport Chekas for the protection of railways and waterways.

(g) *The Special Department (Spetsialnyi Otdel*—known as the *Spets-Otdel)* existed already in 1921, under Gleb Bokii;[183] its principal function then was probably control of concentration camps and other places of detention maintained by the Vecheka.[184]

(h) *The Special Department (Osobyi Otdel)*, responsible for security in the armed forces.

(i) *The Frontier Department (Osobyi Otdel po okhrane granits*—known as the *Pogranichnyi Otdel)* directed the Cheka Special Departments for Frontier Protection and, when these were under political police control, the Frontier Troops.

(j) *The Department for Combating Banditry* existed in late 1921 in the Georgian,[185] as also in the Ukrainian,[186] Cheka, and may also have existed in the Vecheka—it certainly did in the GPU.[187]

THE VECHEKA TROOPS

Upon the dissolution of VNUS in January 1921, the Vecheka Troops—directed by the Staff (later by the Administration) of Vecheka Troops—stood at the exclusive disposal of the Vecheka; they provided the personnel of the battalions attached to individual Provincial Chekas, of the Special Departments (OOs) attached to Red Army formations, and of the Special Departments for Frontier Protection.

VECHEKA STRENGTH IN 1920–2

In an interview given on 27 May 1920, the Vecheka Deputy Chairman, Ksenofontov, told the visiting British Labour Delegation that the entire personnel of the Vecheka numbered 4,500.[188] That is palpably absurd. The admittedly tentative computation arrived at in Chapter V assessed the Vecheka's total manpower, as at 1 January 1919, as being *circa* 37,000—a distinctly conservative estimate. Two years later, around December 1920, Latsis put the Vecheka's strength at 31,000.[189] If that figure stands for civilian personnel only, it may well be correct.[190] But if the Vecheka's support troops are added, to

the tune of 68,332 (Sofinov's figure for 1 December 1920),[191] then the total rises to *circa* 100,000. Moreover, in mid-1921, when the Vecheka stood at the apogee of its growth, it included: (a) 137,106 Vecheka Troops, whose deployment included the Ukraine and the Transcaucasus,[192] (b) 94,288 Frontier Troops, guarding all Soviet frontiers[193] (these troops were under Vecheka command from November 1920 to October 1921, and were set a ceiling of 100,000),[194] and (c) some 30,000 civilian staff, presenting a total of around 261,000 men, quite a considerable force. The corresponding strength of the swiftly disbanding Red Army on 1 May 1921 was 2,614,000,[195] giving a ratio of one Chekist to every ten soldiers.

There ensued a rapid reduction, which was due to the transfer of the Frontier Troops to Red Army command and the manpower economies foreshadowed in Dzerzhinsky's letter of 9 July 1921 to Unshlikht.[196] (Dzerzhinsky was demonstrably capable of effecting drastic staff reductions: within a year of his appointment, on 14 April 1921, as Commissar for Communications, he had cut railway and water transport personnel by 508,000 out of a work force of 1,279,000.)[197] By December 1921, the Vecheka's strength had dropped to 143,000, according to statistics furnished by the Commission for Reduction of Personnel in Institutions of the RSFSR, and by May 1922 its successor, the GPU, had further declined to 105,000,[198] at which level its personnel establishment was also put in a decree of September 1922.[199] That figure was limited to the GPU of the RSFSR, excluding GPUs of the satellite republics of the Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Transcaucasus, but it may well have included the GPU Troops of all the republics, centrally controlled by the GPU of the RSFSR. September 1922 also saw the reintegration of the Frontier Troops in the political police.[200]

THE CHEKA OF THE UKRAINE

The most significant of the nominally independent Soviet satellite republics was that of the Ukraine, whose economically and strategically important territory figured as the principal battleground of the Civil War. On 12(25) December 1917, the First All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets proclaimed the Ukraine a Soviet Republic; security functions in it were discharged by Military Revolutionary Committees and by other, locally improvised special organs, for the co-ordination of which a central Extraordinary Commission for Defence of Country and Revolution was created on 22 February 1918.[201] There followed the German military occupation of the Ukraine (March–November 1918), after which the Provisional

Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Ukraine established, by a decree of 3 December 1918,[202] the All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission[203] (a title abbreviated in Russian to VU-Cheka) for Combating Counter-Revolution, Speculation, Sabotage, and Misuse of Authority; it was attached to the Department of Internal Affairs (embryo of the Ukrainian NKVD), but subordinated direct to the Provisional Government. As Chairman of the VU-Cheka, the decree named Semen Shvarts,[204] member of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party (KP(b)U). However, a decree of 30 May 1919[205] converted the VU-Cheka into a regular department of the NKVD of the Ukraine, its Chairman and Deputy Chairman (both appointed by the Ukrainian Sovnarkom) being members of the NKVD Collegium.

Organisationally the VU-Cheka modelled itself on the Vecheka. Local Chekas constituted sub-departments of executive committees of local Soviets; following the Vecheka's example, the Ukrainian District Chekas were abolished by a decree of 21 May 1919,[206] and were similarly replaced by politburos of district Militias.[207] Special Departments (OOs) in the Ukraine initially consisted of Vecheka OO detachments serving with the Red Army.[208] Moreover, on 2 April 1919 (the day after the VU-Cheka's move from Kharkov to Kiev, the new abode of the Ukrainian Government),[209] the Ukrainian Sovnarkom appointed M. Ia. Latsis, prominent member of the Vecheka Collegium, as Chairman of the VU-Cheka, with Shvarts as his deputy.[210]

Consequent upon Denikin's advance northward through the Ukraine, the central VU-Cheka was dissolved in mid-August 1919 and, with the evacuation of the Kiev Cheka on 30 August, the VU-Cheka apparatus ceased to exist.[211] Its rebirth followed the Red Army's gradual recovery of Ukrainian territory after Denikin's reverse at Orel in mid-October. By December 1919, several Provincial Chekas had begun to function, notably those of Kiev and Odessa,[212] their supervision being entrusted to the Administration of Extraordinary Commissions and Special Departments of the Republic, established in late December and attached to the All-Ukrainian Revolutionary Committee. This new Ukrainian political police agency was headed by V. N. Mantsev, ex-deputy chairman of the Moscow Cheka and a continuing Vecheka Collegium member; his deputies were two other non-Ukrainian Chekists, E. G. Evdokimov and K. M. Karlson.[213] On 17 March 1920, a decree[214] promoted the Administration to the status of Central Administration of Extraordinary Commissions of the Ukraine for Combating Counter-

Revolution, Speculation, and Misuse of Authority (generally known by its abbreviated title—*Tsuprchrezkom*),[215] which was attached direct to the Sovnarkom of the Ukrainian Republic; Mantsev was formally appointed its chief on 25 March,[216] functioning also as the Vecheka's political representative attached to the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, and being elected member of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee.[217]

By a decree of 2 April 1921, the *Tsuprchrezkom* was redesignated the All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Speculation and Misuse of Authority, reverting thereby to its earlier title, adopted in December 1918 and abbreviated to VU-Cheka. It remained subordinated direct to the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, but representatives of the Ukrainian NKIu and NKVD sat on its Collegium, headed by Mantsev.[218]

Just six weeks after the Vecheka had been transformed into the GPU of the RSFSR, its obedient offspring, the VU-Cheka, followed suit: a Ukrainian TsIK decree of 22 March 1922[219] converted it into the GPU of the Ukraine—a component of the Ukrainian NKVD, whose People's Commissar (or his deputy) headed the GPU. In most respects the Ukrainian decree was a carbon copy of the Russian one, with one important exception: the Chairman of the Ukrainian GPU was at the same time the Russian GPU's plenipotentiary in the Ukraine (to whom all the Special Departments (OOs), Transport Departments, and GPU Troops of the RSFSR, stationed in the Ukraine, were subordinated), thereby emphasising the dependence of the Ukrainian political police on Moscow.

VECHEKA CONTROL OVER THE UKRAINIAN AND OTHER REPUBLICAN CHEKAS

The closest co-operation existed between the Vecheka and the Cheka of the Ukraine, with the former effectively controlling the latter. The appointment of senior Vecheka men such as Latsis, Mantsev, and Evdokimov to the top posts in the Ukrainian organisation speaks for itself; there were also massive infusions of Russian Chekists at lower levels. On 9 February 1920, the Vecheka Presidium, consisting of Ksenofontov, Zhukov, and Mantsev, instructed Valobuev, Commander of the VOKhR Troops of the RSFSR, to make available within a month nine VOKhR battalions for service with the Ukrainian Provincial Chekas.[220] And, on the outbreak of war with Poland in April 1920, Dzerzhinsky took charge of the internal front in the Ukraine and committed to it huge reinforcements of Cheka personnel and VOKhR detachments from Russia. The Ukrainian

Cheka, for its part, was obliged by a special resolution of the Ukrainian Government to assist the Vecheka and carry out its operational assignments.[221]

In practice the Ukrainian Cheka constituted an operational arm of the Vecheka. The latter's Presidium, sitting on 11 April 1920, agreed to an interchange of personnel between the two services; it laid down that the Ukrainian Cheka enjoyed independence as regards administration, training, and inspection—matters in which the Vecheka did not interfere—but that on issues of fundamental importance, whether organisational or operational, Vecheka regulations and instructions were binding on the Ukrainian Chekas, and should be transmitted to them direct, bypassing VU-Cheka headquarters.[222] A similar or even more pronounced pattern of dependence on the Vecheka applied in the Vecheka's relations with the Chekas of the other, still nominally independent, Socialist Federal Soviet Republics (Belorussia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan), not to speak of the various Autonomous Republics and Regions of the RSFSR, which were constitutionally integrated in the Russian Republic.

Technically, the Vecheka's control over the Chekas of both Federal and Autonomous Republics was exercised through the system, already referred to, of Vecheka plenipotentiaries posted to these republics, who simultaneously commanded the Vecheka Troops and other Vecheka organs stationed in such republics, and also headed these republics' own Cheka organisations. Thus, even prior to the establishment, in 1923, of the constitutionally centralised OGPU of the USSR, the All-Russian political police of the RSFSR in practice imposed its firm control over the Chekas (and, during 1922–3, the GPUs) of the lesser republics.

CENTRAL PARTY DIRECTION OF THE POLITICAL POLICE

Basically, the Vecheka's authority over the Chekas of these theoretically more or less independent territories derived from the primacy of the Russian Communist Party, whose 1919 programme stated:

> The Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, and Belorussia exist at the present time as individual Soviet republics. This is how the question of the forms of *State* structure has been decided for the present. But it does not in the least mean that the Russian Communist Party should in turn reorganise itself on the lines of a federation of independent Communist Parties. The Eighth Congress of the RKP decrees: it is necessary that there exist a *single* centralised Communist Party and a single Central Committee to direct the entire work of the Party throughout all the parts of the RSFSR. All decisions of the RKP and its directing organs are unconditionally binding on all branches of the Party, irrespective of their national composition. The Central Committees of

the Ukrainian, Latvian, Lithuanian Communists enjoy the status of regional committees of the Party, and are wholly subordinated to the Central Committee of the RKP.[223]

As with the Russian Cheka so also with the other republican Chekas, ultimate responsibility for their direction was vested in the Politburo of the Russian Communist Party. In the crisis of Denikin's advance in August 1919, it was the Russian Politburo-cum-Orgburo which decided on the Ukrainian Cheka's dissolution and amalgamation with the Vecheka, delegating authority to Peters, as the Vecheka's representative attached to the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, to take the necessary action via the Ukrainian TsIK.[224] It was, again, the Russian Politburo which unilaterally decided, in April 1920, to send Dzerzhinsky to the Ukraine, to restore order on the internal front.[225] The political police throughout the territory of all Soviet republics was in essence centrally and directly controlled by the Party Politburo in Moscow.

Chapter XI

Vecheka Versatility under Dzerzhinsky

> I believe that our apparatus is one of the most effectively functioning ones. Its ramifications are everywhere. People pay heed to it. People fear it.
>
> Dzerzhinsky on the Vecheka, quoted by Lunacharskii in 'V Narkomprose', 1931, p. 182

Felix Dzerzhinsky was a man possessed of seemingly inexhaustible nervous energy and exceptional organisational talent. His competence was such that, besides directing the Vecheka, he was also entrusted, in March 1919, with the important NKVD portfolio—carrying responsibility for local government administration and public order throughout the Soviet Russian Republic, and additionally, in April 1921, with the Commissariat for Communications, involving the herculean task of restoring rail and water transport from its Civil War condition of breakdown and chaos. Besides these three major commitments, each one of which would have taxed the full-time capacities of a lesser Commissar, 'Iron Felix', as he was dubbed, found time and energy to spare for a miscellany of extraneous duties. Although some of these enterprises, such as snow clearing or dealing with epidemics, had no apparent security relevance, Dzerzhinsky readily harnessed the Chekas to the task in hand, using the political police as a supervisory commando force. The Vecheka had proved itself to be such a well disciplined, efficient, and versatile machine, applying its widely deployed manpower resources with ruthless authority, that it became an indispensable all-purpose tool of Party and Government. Even if it lacked the specialised expertise to solve, by itself, the various problems encountered, the Vecheka could be relied upon to mobilise and oversee the manpower needed for any given project. In a country ravaged by Civil War and ruled by decree in the face of widespread opposition, it required application of unrelenting pressure and fear to impose the will of the proletarian dictatorship, and to achieve rapid and positive results; armed with powers of life and death, and preceded by a fearsome reputation, the Vecheka proved to be the ideal, ready-made agency for such purposes. Moreover, the ubiquitous Chekas fancied themselves in the role of prime instruments of the Party's will, and deemed no domain of the

country's life untainted by counter-revolutionary contagion, or immune from inquisitorial Chekist attention. Without a doubt, some of the Vecheka's auxiliary tasks could be seen as a legitimate, or at least a logical, extension of its own counter-subversion charter; such, for instance, was the combating of crime.

COMBATING CRIME

Although the Vecheka constituted the political—not the criminal—police, it concerned itself with crime virtually from the start, as demonstrated in its summary executions of bandits seized *in flagrante delictu* in Petrograd (Prince Eboli shot on 24 February 1918) and Moscow (several bandits executed on 12 March 1918). A Vecheka sub-department for combating crime (later raised to the status of a full department) had been established by Lenin's Sovnarkom instruction of 31 January 1918. Such political police intrusion into the competence of the conventional criminal police was partly due to delay in establishing the latter, because of indecision regarding the character and functions of the Soviet Militia. Even after the establishment, in the second half of 1918, of the Workers' and Peasants' Militia—a professional centralised body under NKVD control—the Vecheka continued to play a prominent part in the war on crime-with-violence, as illustrated by the following episode. On 19 January 1919, Lenin, whilst being driven out of Moscow, was stopped and robbed by bandits, who did not recognise him.[1] Two days later, in an *Izvestia* article, Lenin referred to the prevalence of crime in Moscow, including murders of militiamen, and called upon the Vecheka to take immediate drastic measures to suppress banditry.[2] Dzerzhinsky and Peters thereupon convoked a conference for the co-ordination of a determined onslaught on criminals; a special commission was set up, on which Ksenofontov and Pupko represented the Vecheka, Roslavets the M-Cheka, and Grib the City Soviet. On 25 January, *Izvestia* published an appeal to the citizens of Moscow to help defeat banditry, and the next day the city was placed under martial law.[3]

The line of demarcation between the Chekas and the Militia remained imprecise in the field of straightforward crime. 'Political banditry'—another name for peasant insurrection and nationalist rebellion—fell more readily within the province of the political police; indeed, it flourished on a scale serious enough to require massive intervention by the Red Army. For public consumption, the Communist régime invariably attributed peasant disorders—which usually sprang from economic pressures such as grain confiscation—to class

conflict caused by the *kulaks*, or to political motivation, blamed on the SRs and Mensheviks.

CONTROL AND CONFISCATION OF FIREARMS

Another Chekist chore was the control of firearms, a vital precaution in civil war, and one difficult to enforce in a country whose huge armies, mobilised for war against the Central Powers, had dissolved chaotically following the February and October Revolutions. To compound this problem, there was mass desertion from the Red Army. Numerous proclamations, issued by government and Chekas, called upon the population to surrender firearms and explosive devices; an early proclamation, issued in March 1918 by the Petrograd Cheka, threatened offenders with prosecution by Revolutionary Tribunal.[4] The Chekas and the Militia were responsible for enforcement of firearms regulations.[5] In tense situations when White advances and prospective counter-revolutionary risings menaced Soviet cities, the Vecheka organised large-scale door-to-door searches, such as the one carried out on the night of 14/15 June 1919 by 20,000 workers, under Chekist direction, in the bourgeois residential districts of Petrograd; this security trawl netted a huge haul of firearms, including 6,626 rifles, 644 revolvers, and nearly 150,000 rounds of ammunition, besides machine-guns, bombs, etc.[6] Ten days later, the Vecheka instructed all local Chekas to announce a fortnight's deadline within which all firearms, explosives, binoculars, etc., held without authorisation, must be handed in, under pain of severe punishment; on expiry of time, plus three days extra grace, the Chekas were to set about systematically disarming all the well-to-do, the *kulaks*, priests, Right and Left SRs, and Mensheviks, searching each house in turn.[7]

COMBATING EPIDEMICS

Certain of the Vecheka's extra-curricular activities could by no stretch of the imagination be reconciled with its prescribed purposes. Such was the Cheka's war on disease. When large-scale typhus epidemics were ravaging the Red Army (in 1920, up to 30 per cent of army personnel suffered from typhus),[8] a resolution of the Council of Defence, dated 8 November 1919, established a special All-Russian Commission for improving medical conditions in the Republic, attached to the Commissariat for Health; the Vecheka was prominently represented on this commission, both centrally and at local level.[9] An Extraordinary Medical Commission of the Vecheka, formed on 2 November 1919,[10] toured extensively on the eastern

front, inspecting hospitals, organising quarantine zones, etc. Chief of this mobile mission was M. S. Kedrov, ex-commander of the Vecheka OO, and a doctor by profession, to whom Dzerzhinsky entrusted the implementation of the Vecheka's anti-typhus measures; to this end, Kedrov made full use of the OO network's facilities.[11] In his capacity as Vecheka plenipotentiary for the medical sector, Kedrov was co-signatory with Dzerzhinsky of a directive to Provincial Chekas and Railway Chekas 'concerning measures for combating devastation in the medical sphere'.[12] In December 1921, in order to prevent a typhus epidemic in Eastern Russia, the Sovnarkom enjoined the NKVD and Vecheka to impose a ban on railway travel in certain zones.[13]

CONSCRIPTION AND MILITARISATION OF LABOUR

The Bolshevik Revolution ushered in a period of workers' control in industry, but this libertarian experiment came to an end in the course of 1918 as, under pressures resulting from Civil War, poor productivity, and loss of raw materials owing to German occupation, Lenin progressively introduced the siege economy known as War Communism. This entailed rigorous centralisation of the entire economy, disciplined regimentation of the labour force, and, eventually, total mobilisation, allocation, and control of the country's manpower resources, with the Soviet state *apparat* wielding dictatorial powers over the workers.

The intended application of labour compulsion to all classes of the population was foreshadowed from the start: already in December 1917, in the preamble to his abortive draft decree for establishment of the Vecheka, Lenin had proposed measures to conscript the bourgeoisie for obligatory work, 'as a first step towards introduction of universal labour service'.[14] Theoretically, the principle of universal labour service was adopted under the RSFSR Constitution of 10 July 1918,[15] and was enunciated in the Labour Code published on 10 December 1918, applying to all able-bodied citizens aged between 16 and 50.[16] This principle was put into practice in a succession of mobilisation decrees issued over the period 1918–20.[17]

A decree of 12 April 1919[18] prohibited employees from transferring, without employers' consent, from one Soviet institution to another; Soviet citizens were now legally tied to their existing jobs. This measure was intended to curb the large-scale migration of hungry and cold city dwellers to the relatively better conditions of existence in the countryside, a migration which drastically depleted the proletarian work force.[19] To enforce this interdiction, and to tighten up labour discipline, the VTsIK decree of 15 April 1919

established forced labour camps, initially under Cheka auspices, to penalise offenders against labour regulations.[20] Moreover, as we have seen, the parallel system of Cheka concentration camps, originally intended to hold the hostile bourgeoisie, came to include 'particularly obstructive workers who repeatedly refuse to submit to disciplinary measures'.[21]

Even these measures of industrial conscription, backed up by severe sanctions, proved inadequate; at Lenin's request Trotsky addressed himself to the acute problems of low productivity and shortage of manpower, and came up with the doctrine of militarisation of labour, set out in his twenty-four theses published in *Pravda* on 17 December 1919.[22] These were approved by the Party Central Committee on 22 January 1920, and were translated a week later into a decree on universal labour service,[23] which laid down that: (a) the entire able-bodied population be called up to perform, irrespective of their regular work, occasional or regular labour service such as procurement of food and fuel, agricultural or building work, transportation, snow clearing, etc.; (b) units of the Red Army and Navy be used on civilian work; (c) skilled workers, currently engaged in the Army or in agriculture, be transferred to state enterprises; (d) persons without regular occupation be enlisted into useful public work; (e) the available labour force be reallocated in accordance with requirements.[24]

For the implementation of Trotsky's militarisation policy, a further statute, passed on 3 February 1920,[25] established an inter-departmental committee to take charge of the mobilisation of the entire labour force in the country. This was the three-man Main Committee for Universal Labour Conscription,[26] known as *Glavkomtrud*, consisting of representatives of the Commissariats for Labour, War, and Internal Affairs, answerable to the Defence Council; its subordinate committees, at provincial, district, and city level, were attached to executive committees of local Soviets. Furthermore, supervisory *Glavkomtrud* commissions were attached to factories and plants; Front and Army Committees for Universal Labour Conscription were instituted by Defence Council decree of 21 April 1920. By Sovnarkom decision of 19 February 1920, membership of the central *Glavkomtrud* committee was increased to five, with Dzerzhinsky appointed as chairman.[27] In practice the trade unions, which should have safeguarded the workers' interests under this policy, were largely ignored, and the Commissariats for War and Internal Affairs, together with the Vecheka, became the principal agencies through which Soviet labour policies were applied.[28]

Meanwhile the Red Army was being swiftly drafted for civilian labour duties; on 15 January 1920, the Sovnarkom approved a decree converting the Third Army, stationed in the Urals, into the First Revolutionary Army of Labour.[29] Other Labour Armies followed.[30]

The first shot in the campaign for conscription of labour had in fact been fired on the agricultural front. Anticipating the enactment (on 29 January 1920) of the decree on universal labour service, compulsory labour and cartage duties were imposed on the rural population by Defence Council decree of 19 November 1919, signed by Lenin. The NKVD was directed to give this measure effect, with Cheka assistance. Paragraph 8 of the decree specified: 'If necessary, Internal Security Troops [VOKhR] as well as local Extraordinary Commissions [Chekas] will be called upon to render energetic assistance to organs of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs in enforcing compulsory labour regulations.'[31]

The Menshevik, Simon Liberman, a member of the Central Timber Commission since November/December 1918, saw at first hand how this 'energetic assistance' was applied. He was present at the Defence Council's discussion of remedies for the catastrophic fuel shortage which the above decree was designed to alleviate. Dzerzhinsky, ignoring the fact that state foresters were timber experts, not manual workers, proposed with characteristic egalitarian fervour that the age-old inequality between them and the peasants be rectified, and that they should be obliged to produce the same quantity of firewood as the peasantry. He insisted, moreover, that the foresters should be held personally responsible for fulfilment of the peasants' norm, and that, should the latter fail to deliver their quota, then the foresters concerned should be shot. 'When a dozen or two are shot', said Dzerzhinsky, 'the rest will tackle the job in earnest.' Lenin, in the chair at this conference, approved the proposal, and it was passed, but he hypocritically ordered that mention of the decision on shooting be omitted from the minutes.[32] This Defence Council regulation, dated 21 November 1919, was at first laxly enforced; on 12 March 1920, the Defence Council directed the Vecheka and its provincial branches to supervise the regulation's fulfilment most rigorously.[33]

In the hard winter of 1919/20, the fuel crisis and general breakdown of rail communications prompted other measures involving Cheka support. On 12 November 1919, the Defence Council charged the Vecheka's Economic Department and Transport Chekas to supervise the implementation of arrangements for supplying the transport system with fuel.[34] On 31 January, the Sovnarkom created an extraordinary commission, known as *Chrezsnegput*, to organise

conscript labour for clearing snow from railway lines; Dzerzhinsky was appointed its chairman in his NKVD capacity, and brought Cheka and VOKhR forces to bear on the problem.[35] Indeed Dzerzhinsky had already, on 28 December, alerted all territorial Chekas to deal with this emergency.[36]

Cheka help was enlisted in other similar contexts. A Sovnarkom decree of 26 February 1920, which set out procedures for fuel procurement for Moscow, required various relevant economic and fuel-producing agencies to submit progress reports to the Moscow Cheka, or to the Vecheka Inter-Departmental Commission, for these latter bodies to investigate and tackle any delays that might occur.[37] When, in February 1921, the Defence Council established a temporary Commission for Combating the Fuel Crisis (its board included the Chekists Avanesov, as chairman, and Messing), the Vecheka apparatus was directed to assist fuel departments in prevention of pilfering and red tape.[38]

Meanwhile, in April 1920, the Main Committee for Universal Labour Conscription (*Glavkomtrud*), under Dzerzhinsky's chairmanship, created a special agency to direct the rural sector of the compulsory labour front. This was the Central Extraordinary Commission on Firewood and Cartage (Russian title abbreviated to *Tsechrezkomtopguzh*[39]), with local commissions paralleling the territorial structure of *Glavkomtrud*. Its charter was to organise and enforce compulsory mobilisation of the rural population, and of carts and horses, for procurement of firewood and other fuel. Once again it was Dzerzhinsky who became chairman of this commission; his fellow members on its board included Vasilev and Eiduk of the NKVD, and Ikhnovskii—representing the Inter-Departmental Commission for Combating Speculation, attached to the Vecheka.[40]

The scale of operations of *Tsechrezkomtopguzh* (as also of *Glavkomtrud*) was colossal: during the first six months of 1920, 5,824,182 rural workers and 4,161,859 horses were mobilised for firewood and cartage duties in just 36 provinces (out of a total of 55) in which rural conscription was in force. The right to use mobilised labour was granted to a variety of central government extraordinary committees and commissions, as well as to local Soviet authorities; since there were few provisos safeguarding the rights of the mobilised population, the system led to an outrageous exploitation of the peasant masses, as was publicly admitted by the People's Commissariat for Labour in 1921.[41] Consequently, enforcement of labour mobilisation in the countryside could lead only to resentment, evasion

and resistance, making for an explosive situation requiring vigilance and repression on the part of the enforcement and security organs.

The Vecheka contributed also to the implementation of paragraph 1 (d) of the decree of 29 January 1920, i.e. 'to enlist persons without regular occupations into useful public work': the conscription of persons 'not engaged in socially useful labour' was entrusted to a special commission consisting of representatives of the Vecheka, the NKVD, and the NKIu.[42] Vecheka involvement here was particularly appropriate since the bulk of this group was drawn from the expropriated classes which, as class enemies, were of natural interest to the Chekas.

Inevitably there was wide-scale evasion of labour conscription, as well as mass desertion from the Red Army;[43] many thousands of army deserters and peasant fugitives went to swell the 'Greens' (so-called because the forests were their habitat), whose lawless marauding bands roamed the countryside. The Vecheka and the Central Commission for Combating Desertion,[44] together with their respective local organs, were the instruments of *Glavkomtrud* for dealing with desertion.[45] Eventually, upon the inauguration of NEP, *Glavkomtrud* was itself abolished on 24 March 1921,[46] but the basic system of compulsory labour continued, enforced by the Commissariats of Labour, War, and Internal Affairs,[47] with assistance from the Vecheka.

MISCELLANEOUS VECHEKA ASSIGNMENTS

Meanwhile, the Chekas were increasingly involved in aiding the NKVD and other state agencies to carry out various governmental measures and to bring succour to stricken areas. When, in May 1920, following the resumption of war with Poland, the Defence Council ordered the requisitioning of horses for army use, the Vecheka figured in a commission formed to effect this decree.[48] When fires spread havoc in the spring of 1921, the Vecheka was enrolled for the task of combating conflagrations, and participated in a special commission established for that purpose, under the NKVD, by Defence Council decree of 23 April 1921.[49] By then the Vecheka had already issued a circular urging its Chekas to combat arson committed by 'Entente spies'.[50]

When famine and devastation stalked the land after the Civil War, Dzerzhinsky, after obtaining the Party Central Committee's agreement on 26 January 1921, left immediately for Kharkov in order to help in the economic restoration of the vital coal-producing Donbas region. On 19 February, the Ukrainian Sovnarkom resolved to form a

fuel commission under Dzerzhinsky's chairmanship; all the Chekas of the Ukraine were mobilised by Dzerzhinsky in a campaign to overcome the shortage of fuel and the ravages of war.[51] There exists Dzerzhinsky's long letter of instruction and advice to the chief of the Donets Provincial Cheka, K. M. Karlson, bidding him harness his Chekists to the task of rehabilitating the local economy.[52]

Similarly, in the hungry summer of 1921, Dzerzhinsky requested his deputy, Unshlikht, to mobilise the Provincial Chekas, Transport Chekas, and OOs in order to help bring relief to famine-stricken areas and thereby prevent this disaster from being exploited by the forces of counter-revolution.[53] One of Unshlikht's responses was to order the Vecheka Troops to assist the local population in bringing in the harvest.[54]

WAIFS AND STRAYS

Soviet chroniclers of the Vecheka have made much of its role in succouring the *besprizornye*—the multitudes of destitute, shelterless, roving waifs and strays, orphaned casualties of the Civil War and of the famine that followed: their number during the winter of 1920/1 has been put at around 4 million.[55] Dzerzhinsky's humanitarian instincts drove him to take a fruitful initiative: he proposed to Lunacharskii, Commissar for Education, that a broadly based commission should be formed to tackle the problem, and that he himself should head it. He said: 'I should like to bring the Vecheka apparatus as a practical reality into this work. A second consideration prompts me; I believe that our apparatus is one of the most effectively functioning ones. Its ramifications are everywhere. People pay heed to it. People fear it.'[56]

On 27 January 1921, the VTsIK Presidium passed a resolution establishing a Commission for the Betterment of Children's Lives (attached to VTsIK) and appointing Dzerzhinsky as its chairman;[57] this became a decree on 10 February.[58] Straightaway, on 27 January, Dzerzhinsky issued a circular to all Chekas, instructing them to take urgent measures for the relief of children, in close co-operation with the responsible state organisations, such as the Commissariat for Education.[59] The first meeting of the Commission took place at Vecheka headquarters, and local Chekas played a very active part in the campaign to rescue and resettle the destitute children.[60]

There is ample evidence that Dzerzhinsky was particularly fond of children, but, apart from sentimental and humanitarian considerations, the intrusion of the political police into this social and philanthropic field was also doubtless due to the need for a really

efficient state organ to attack a problem of huge dimensions, and one which posed a threat to public order in the shape of roaming gangs of desperate teenagers resorting to hooliganism and banditry. Dzerzhinsky was in any case the logical choice for operating such a vast relief campaign since, besides controlling the ubiquitous Cheka, he also had at his disposal the NKVD's whole administrative apparatus of local government, underpinned by the Militia. Ironically, the Cheka and the Militia had, in applying the terror, themselves been responsible in the first place for orphaning tens if not hundreds of thousands of these victims of the Revolution.

COMMISSAR FOR COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout the Civil War the Vecheka, in partnership with the Railway Security Troops and the Militia, performed its share of policing the railways and waterways, the security of which was vital for the economic and military survival of the Soviet Republic. During the winter of 1919/20, the transport crisis had reached such proportions that departmental responsibility for communications was entrusted, in March 1920, to Trotsky,[61] who proceeded to militarise the railways, applying the same ruthless discipline as he had introduced into the Red Army. Trotsky's dictatorial handling of the Communications Commissariat precipitated the bitter dispute over the nature of the trade unions, culminating in Lenin's political clamp-down on intra-Party factionalism; this move and the economic retreat into NEP were announced at the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921. Trotsky's policy of militarisation of labour was now compromised, but a super-efficient administrative drive was still required to rescue transport from chaos and stagnation, and so, by decree of 14 April 1921, Dzerzhinsky was appointed People's Commissar for Communications (NKPS), whilst still retaining the NKVD portfolio and the chairmanship of the Vecheka.[62] This combination of posts facilitated the co-ordination of inter-departmental resources, not least those of the Vecheka, in the difficult undertaking of restoring the failing transport system. Dzerzhinsky introduced a number of Chekists into the NKPS, including V. V. Fomin, a founder-member of the Vecheka Collegium, who became Dzerzhinsky's NKPS deputy,[63] having previously served as head of the Vecheka Transport Department.[64]

DZERZHINSKY'S POLISH COMMUNIST ROLE

Up to 1921, the Vecheka's course was one of constant growth, both in number of personnel and in diversification of functions. Many of these

functions came about as the predictable proliferation of a political police under the rule of a dictatorship. Others, like aid to the *besprizornye*, owed much to Dzerzhinsky's personal initiative, born of his varied interests and commitments. One such commitment was to the Polish Marxist movement, in which his involvement continued after 1917, although it was henceforth subsidiary to his service in the Russian Communist cause. It was as a delegate of the Social Democratic Party of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL) that Dzerzhinsky entered the Bolshevik Party after his release from prison on 1 March 1917. As from April 1917, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the SDKPiL in Russia and, following the merger in Poland of the SDKPiL with the left wing of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS Lewica) in December 1918 to form the Communist Workers' Party of Poland (KPRP), Dzerzhinsky served on the Central Executive Committee of the KPRP on Russian soil.[65]

In June 1920, during the Polish-Soviet War, the Red Army counter-attacked and penetrated deep into Polish territory, being eventually halted and repulsed in mid-August at the gates of Warsaw. Lenin had counted on total Red Army occupation of Poland, and on the consequent formation of a Polish Soviet Socialist Republic; in preparation for this there was created, on 19 July 1920, the Polish Bureau of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee, with Dzerzhinsky as chairman, and Iu. Markhlevskii, F. Kon, I. S. Unshlikht, and E. Prukhniak (secretary) as members.[66] The same day, the Russian Party's Orgburo decided on the general mobilisation of Polish Communists for service on the Polish front; this measure, carried out by a special commission consisting of Dzerzhinsky, Markhlevskii, and Unshlikht, mobilised more than 5,700 Polish Communists out of a total of 18,000 Polish members of the Russian Communist Party.

On the night of 23/24 July, the Polish Bureau left Moscow for Smolensk, Minsk, and beyond. The Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Poland was established on 30 July, with the same membership as the Polish Bureau, but with Markhlevskii as chairman; it took up residence in Belostok (Białystok) on 3 August. Dzerzhinsky worked feverishly: 'like ten men' in Kon's phrase.[67] In addition to his Polish political and military duties (for he was also involved in raising a Polish Red Army), he served from 9 August to 10 September as a member of the Revolutionary War Council of the Soviet Red Army's western front.[68] Nor did Dzerzhinsky forget his Chekist role; before leaving Moscow he had arranged—with the assent of the Russian Communist Party—for all Poles serving in the Vecheka to be

disengaged and placed at his disposal on the Polish front. On 1 August, he ordered that these Polish Chekists should, on arrival in Minsk, be utilised by Medved, chief of the Special Department (OO) on the western front, and by the Red Army staff. Dzerzhinsky called repeatedly for the reinforcement of the Red Army's OOs in Poland.[69]

In mid-August, the Polish army counter-attacked and routed the invading Soviet forces. The Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Poland was dissolved. Dzerzhinsky retreated with the Polish Bureau to Minsk. The war was at an end. This proved to be Dzerzhinsky's last major intervention in Polish Communist affairs, but he continued, until the end of his life, to take an active interest in Polish matters, participating in almost all Polish Communist conferences on Soviet soil. It was as a delegate of the Polish Communist Party that he attended the Fourth Comintern Congress in November-December 1922.[70]

On 20 September 1920, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party ordered Dzerzhinsky's demobilisation, obliging him to go on sick leave before returning to command the Vecheka.[71] Dzerzhinsky duly retired for a fortnight's rest in the country, under arrangements solicitously made by Lenin.[72] Two months later, Dzerzhinsky's service in the political police was almost terminated, as the Central Committee's Orgburo (on which Dzerzhinsky had himself been serving since 5 April 1920 as a candidate-member[73]—thus being well placed to influence the Orgburo's decision) decided on his transfer from the Vecheka to the economic sector; however, on 17 December, the Central Committee countermanded that decision, opting instead to send Dzerzhinsky on sick leave once more, and meanwhile to look into the question of his undertaking economic work. The outcome was a compromise: in April 1921, Dzerzhinsky added the Commissariat for Communications to his existing responsibilities for the Vecheka and the NKVD.[74] Not until 1924 would Dzerzhinsky realise his ultimate aspiration by becoming overlord of the Soviet economic system.[75]

Chapter XII

Dzerzhinsky and His Chekists

> Dzerzhinsky's devotion to his cause was so intense that it made him a fanatic who would shrink from no act of terror as long as he was convinced that it was necessary for the cause.
>
> Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed, Trotsky: 1921–1929*, London, 1959, p. 85

Dzerzhinsky's achievements transcended his involvement in the Vecheka both in time and scope. Even before the Vecheka's foundation, he had devoted twenty years of his life to the cause of revolutionary socialism, whilst his final five years, 1921–6, were largely applied to other absorbing, back-breaking tasks, such as the reconstruction of Russia's transport system and her economy. Nevertheless, his most original and lasting creation, the one by which he is chiefly remembered, remains the political police. This was peculiarly his monument, his legacy to Soviet Russia. To it he gave his almost undivided attention over the first three years of its existence, and he continued thereafter to be its titular head and factual supervisor until his death in harness in July 1926.

Dzerzhinsky gave himself unsparingly to the task of building the Vecheka. During 1918, the Vecheka's first, formative year, he worked, ate, and slept in his Vecheka office.[1] On 27 May 1918 he wrote to his wife in Switzerland:

> I am in the front line of battle. A soldier's life, without respite, for our home must be saved. There is no time to think of one's family and oneself. ... My entire existence is spent in ceaseless activity. ... Physically I am fatigued, but my nerves sustain me and I do not know dejection. I hardly ever leave my office—here I work, and here, in a corner, behind a screen, stands my bed. I have been in Moscow for several months now. My address: Bolshaia Lubianka 11.[2]

So much needed doing, and there were so few experienced hands. Anti-revolutionary plots multiplied and were uncovered by the Vecheka. Dzerzhinsky steeped himself in day-to-day harassing, laborious operational work, teaching his Chekists the arts of investigation by precept and example.[3] He neglected his health, already undermined by years of prison and privation. Like his father, who died of it, Dzerzhinsky suffered from tuberculosis, contracted

during imprisonment in 1900 to mid-1902.[4] In late 1902, and again in May 1903, he had to recuperate in Switzerland and in the Polish mountain resort of Zakopane.[5] In 1910, the SDKPiL sent him to Capri, to restore his health, and there he met Maxim Gorky,[6] who would later frequently intercede with him on behalf of prisoners of the Chekas. At the height of the Red Terror, in early October 1918, Dzerzhinsky, physically exhausted, and doubtless morally prostrated by the butchery required of the Vecheka, was packed off to Switzerland to spend a month with his wife and child, neither of whom he had seen for many years.[7] On 1 February 1919, he was at last joined in Moscow by his family, and took up a less austere but still modest residence with them in the Kremlin.[8] But his ill health persisted. He was coughing up blood in 1919;[9] Clare Sheridan, who modelled his head in 1920, commented on his racking cough.[10]

Just as he subordinated his health, so Dzerzhinsky subordinated all accepted ethical principles to whatever cause he was serving. Lenin's word, the Party's command, these were his only laws. His revolutionary zeal was fanatical; he was prepared to sacrifice countless lives in the interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat. His temperament had need of a cause, of a doctrinal categorical imperative. As a child he was obsessively religious;[11] in adolescence his consuming Catholic faith was replaced by the crusading creed of revolutionary Marxism. A Bundist, A. I. Vainshtein (Rakhmiel), writing a commemorative article in 1926 in *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, noted two qualities in him: fanaticism and mercilessness. Already in 1899 he had observed that Dzerzhinsky was a true revolutionary, a being devoid of extraneous interests, 'a fanatic, a real fanatic of the revolution', and this impression was strengthened in repeated subsequent encounters with Dzerzhinsky; by 1906 Dzerzhinsky had hardened into a self-confident revolutionary, bitingly sarcastic towards his enemies.[12] It is striking that on photographs dated 1898[13] and 1916[14] a sardonic grin twists Dzerzhinsky's mouth; in the 'wanted' circular of 12 July 1902, Dzerzhinsky is described as 'conveying an impression of insolence'.[15] As Vainshtein put it: 'His youthful romanticism had vanished, replaced by mercilessness in the party struggle.'[16] Dzerzhinsky deliberately fostered this element in himself; in his letter of 27 May 1918 to his wife he harped on the need to be merciless: 'My thought induces me to be without pity, and there is in me an iron determination to follow my thought to the end.'[17]

As with Lenin, so in Dzerzhinsky there burned an abstract hatred of the oppressor classes, a readiness to eliminate them wholesale if

need be. This is illustrated by a conversation which took place in August 1917, in the Smolny Institute canteen, between Dzerzhinsky and Raphael Abramovich, the Bundist and Menshevik leader:

'Abramovich, do you remember Lassalle's speech on the essence of a constitution?'

'Yes, of course.'

'He said that a constitution is determined by the correlation of real forces in a country. How does such a correlation of political and social forces change?'

'Oh well, through the process of economic and political development, the evolution of new forms of economy, the rise of different social classes, etc., as you know perfectly well yourself.'

'But couldn't this correlation be altered? Say, through the subjection or extermination of some classes of society?'[18]

This observation had the authentic Leninist ring to it. Such statistically calculated cruelty, demanded by the iron logic of the class war taken to its extreme, was in permanent conflict with Dzerzhinsky's emotional, romantic temperament, with his inborn compassion, which he could never banish, and which induced agonies of remorse for the bloody deeds committed by his Cheka. His *Prison Diary* and published correspondence are full of lyrical outpourings and attest his love of nature, of children, and his nostalgia for an idealised childhood.[19] Trotsky, recalling time served in Siberia, evoked a scene by a bonfire on the bank of the river Lena, with Dzerzhinsky declaiming one of his poems in Polish.[20] In Dzerzhinsky a forced cruelty, bred of iron self-discipline, went hand in hand with tenderness, even sentimentality. When, rarely, he lost control over his feelings, his remorse showed through, as on the occasion of a New Year celebration on 31 December 1918 at the Kremlin, attended by Communist Party leaders; Dzerzhinsky got terribly drunk and went round weeping and beseeching Lenin, Kamenev, and others to shoot him on the spot: 'I have spilt so much blood that I no longer have any right to live. You must shoot me now.'[21]

Dzerzhinsky's personal integrity has never been in question; his whole adult life was dedicated to the cause of proletarian revolution, and no petty considerations or egotistic ambitions sullied his moral purity. Any crimes perpetrated on his orders, such as the shooting of hundreds of hostages, were committed 'for the good of the cause'. For Dzerzhinsky, as for Lenin, the Revolution justified everything: *salus revoliutionis suprema lex*. The Bolshevik régime was fortunate in having a man of such demonstrable devotion to duty and incorruptibility to do its dirty work. As Latsis recognised, it was work from

which many Bolsheviks shrank with repugnance, and which was not for those wearing white gloves or indulging a fastidious conscience.[22]

The ascetic, tormented Dzerzhinsky won himself such sobriquets as 'The Saint of the Revolution', 'The Soviet Savanarola', 'The Grand Inquisitor of Bolshevism'. He coveted a martyr's crown; he was bitterly chagrined that he had allowed himself to be taken prisoner by the LSR rebels in the *putsch* of July 1918, and, after his release, he complained to Sverdlov: 'Why did they not shoot me? Shame that they did not shoot me, that would have been a service to the Revolution.'[23] When, in an interview with *Izvestia* during the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the Vecheka-KGB, the Soviet spy Kim Philby praised Dzerzhinsky as a 'great humanist',[24] he was surely having his wry little joke, for humanism implies precisely those qualities which Dzerzhinsky never possessed: tolerance, broad intellectual sympathies, a spirit of sceptical inquiry, a belief in the fundamental dignity of individual human beings. One saving grace that Dzerzhinsky totally lacked was a sense of humour, as Bruce Lockhart noted in 1918.[25]

Dzerzhinsky shared with Lenin an absolute conviction that his cause was just, and that it justified any and every means judged necessary for its advancement. Subject always to that principle, he was not without a sense of proportion. Thus in early 1920, when the White forces had been beaten back, and again at the close of that year, when the Civil War had been won, it was Dzerzhinsky's own decisive initiative that halted the Chekas' summary application of the death penalty, however limited the respite. He did not want his Chekists to practise cruelty unnecessarily, and opted for moderation when conditions allowed, which was seldom, given Lenin's predilection for maximising class conflict.

Dzerzhinsky also exhibited traits of self-abnegation which, as Lenin's case illustrates, can co-exist with spiritual or intellectual hubris. He led a spartan existence. At work he refused to eat food other than that served to the Chekist rank and file. He was known to faint from exhaustion and hunger.[26] He worked punishingly long hours, up to sixteen or eighteen hours a day, seven days a week.[27] He rarely and unwillingly took leave.[28] His powers of endurance and his fortitude gained him the nickname 'Iron Felix'. In the early years of the Revolution, Dzerzhinsky was the Vecheka incarnate, supplying the guiding concept, the operational flair, the basic expertise. Precisely because of his special aptitude for security work, he committed the error of acting as his own director of operations and neglecting his overall responsibility, with near-fatal consequences in

the LSR Rising. During most of 1920, not only did he preside over the Vecheka, but he was also in direct charge of the Vecheka's very important Special Department (OO) and of the Moscow Cheka.[29] Later, even more weighty duties were thrust upon him so that, glutton for work though he was, he *had* to delegate responsibility, and learned to give wide latitude to his subordinates.[30]

As from March 1919, Dzerzhinsky combined the role of Vecheka Chairman with that of People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, and in mid-April 1921 added to these onerous posts that of People's Commissar for Communications (NKPS). On 2 February 1924, he would exchange the latter commissariat for the even more responsible office of Chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy (VSNKh). Meanwhile, in July 1923, he shed the Internal Affairs appointment when, under the new USSR constitution, the NKVD remained a republic-level RSFSR commissariat, devoid of union status. A. G. Beloborodov, who had been Dzerzhinsky's deputy at the NKVD since around October 1921, was promoted on 7 July 1923 to be full RSFSR People's Commissar for Internal Affairs.[31]

Dzerzhinsky was held in high esteem by his staff in his various undertakings, and earned the respect of outside observers. When, in his NKPS capacity, he had dealings with American Relief Administration representatives, he deeply impressed them by his energy, his quiet efficiency, as well as by his courteous manner and imperturbability.[32] This was in welcome contrast to their general experience of Soviet bureaucracy. Despite his grim reputation, gained in the Vecheka-OGPU, as 'the Russian Marat', he won to a surprising extent the very real affection of his staff in the VSNKh, who saw in him a highly talented, wholly committed, loyal and understanding boss.[33] He came to be an outstanding administrator,[34] mastering the technical elements of such widely differing systems as the NKVD, the NKPS, and VSNKh, rapidly identifying their root problems and proceeding to apply corrective action with dynamic drive.[35] Throughout, as he emphasised in his last speech, he never spared himself.[36] He always pushed himself to the limit.

During the whole of the Vecheka's existence, Dzerzhinsky presided over it as Chairman, except for the brief interlude (8 July—22 August 1918) following the LSR Rising, when Peters filled the temporarily vacated top post. After the termination of the Vecheka, Dzerzhinsky functioned as Chairman of the GPU/OGPU, concurrently with his NKPS/VSNKh appointment, until his death on 20 July 1926.

DZERZHINSKY'S VECHEKA DEPUTIES

In the Vecheka, Dzerzhinsky was assisted by a Deputy Chairman, or, as in the first half of 1918, by two such deputies. Successive incumbents of this important post were:

8 January 1918–6 July 1918: V. A. Aleksandrovich; also, from March, G. D. Zaks[37]
22 August 1918–March/April 1919: Ia. Kh. Peters[38]
March/April 1919[39]–15 April 1921:[40] I. K. Ksenofontov
April 1921[41]–autumn 1923:[42] I. S. Unshlikht

The post of Deputy Chairman was no sinecure. The first two known appointments, those of the LSRs, Aleksandrovich and Zaks, were of a political and potentially nominal character. However, during the first half of 1918, Dzerzhinsky was so busied with operational investigation of conspiracies that he left the administrative control of the Vecheka in Aleksandrovich's hands. The next incumbent, Peters, had to stand in for Dzerzhinsky during the latter's absence in Switzerland in October 1918, and again in January 1919 while Dzerzhinsky was investigating the causes of the capitulation of Perm. Thereafter Dzerzhinsky was increasingly involved in various trouble-shooting assignments, with frequent absences from Moscow over long periods, as during much of 1920, first as Commander of the Rear of the South-West Front in the Ukraine, and then as member of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Poland. His regular duties also expanded considerably with his additional appointment as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs in mid-March 1919, and, especially, as People's Commissar for Communications in mid-April 1921. Dzerzhinsky was so hard pressed in the latter post that he virtually left control of the Vecheka to his deputy,[43] making a practice of devoting solely his evenings and his supposedly free days to duties at the Vecheka.[44] Later, he would similarly put in a full day's work, from 9 a.m., at the VSNKh, and move on, after his evening meal, to the Lubianka, to spend the rest of the evening attending to his political police chores; often his VSNKh commitments kept him busy until long past midnight.[45]

It is noteworthy that Ksenofontov's appointment to the deputyship in March/April 1919 followed rapidly upon Dzerzhinsky's assumption of responsibility for the NKVD, whilst Unshlikht's début as Vecheka Deputy Chairman coincided with Dzerzhinsky's acquisition of the Communications Commissariat. Possibly, on the latter occasion, the Party Central Committee considered that a stronger personality than

Ksenofontov—who has been described as a colourless character, worthy but pedestrian[46]—should be in the deputy's chair, to take some weight off Dzerzhinsky's overburdened shoulders. Peters and Ksenofontov were internal nominations; they had served as Collegium members since the Vecheka's inception. Unshlikht, however, was brought in from outside, presumably to upgrade the calibre of the Vecheka leadership.

THE VECHEKA COLLEGIUM

Nominally, the Chairman, his deputy, and the other members of the Collegium were appointed by the Sovnarkom, but this outward ritual merely formalised a choice made beforehand by the Party Central Committee.[47] Significantly, Dzerzhinsky, in his letter to his deputy dated 23 July 1920, outlining the principles of Collegium work, laid down that during his absence (on the Polish front) the Vecheka Presidium, in the sense of a specific entity, should be discontinued, and that the functions of the Collegium ('kollegialnost', i.e. rule by committee) should be reduced to a minimum, any necessary decisions being taken by the Deputy Chairman in consultation with the head of the department concerned.[48] So, under the pressure of events, the Vecheka's centripetal tendencies asserted themselves, at any rate temporarily, at the expense of the principle of Collegiate responsiblity.

The Collegium normally consisted of 13 or 14 members. Available figures are as follows: 7 December 1917: 10 members appointed to first Collegium;[49] 7–8 January 1918: 10 members (6 Bolsheviks[50] plus 4 LSRs);[51] 9 June 1918: 18 members;[52] 6 July 1918: 20 members (13 Bolsheviks plus 7 LSRs);[53] 27 March 1919: 14 members;[54] 22 January 1920: 14 members;[55] 29 July 1920: 13 members;[56] December 1920: 13 members.[57] The inflated figures for June-July 1918 were caused by the presence of the LSR element in the Collegium, necessitating the introduction of sufficient Bolsheviks to constitute a majority. After the LSR *débâcle* of 6/7 July 1918, the size of the Collegium remained almost constant, despite the immense increase in Vecheka manpower during 1919–20.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SENIOR CHEKISTS

Appendix B contains brief biographical notes on forty senior Chekists, not necessarily all Collegium members; if we add the six prominent Chekists whose biographies are sketched towards the end of the present chapter, plus Dzerzhinsky, we obtain a total of forty-seven Chekists concerning whom we possess a certain amount of background information. For the purpose of analysis, the most important

and best-documented twenty of these Chekists are marshalled in the adjoining table recording some of their basic personal particulars, from which certain general characteristics emerge. On average these top twenty Chekists joined the Party in 1904, at the age of twenty-one. The Party, in this context, is *not* specifically the Bolshevik Party, which is often difficult to identify; it refers more broadly to the Social Democratic Party, whether of Russia (combining the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions), Poland, or Latvia, etc. Thus Dzerzhinsky is shown as having joined the Party in 1895—that being the year in which he entered the newly formed Lithuanian Social Democratic Party. By 1917 these twenty prospective Vecheka leaders were, at the average age of thirty-four, in their prime of life, with some thirteen years' experience of Marxist party membership behind them. Admittedly only about half of these 'Old Chekists' had a specifically Bolshevik Party history of any length or consistency to their credit, the remainder having belonged to a non-Russian Social Democratic Party or to the Menshevik wing of the Russian Party.

By social origin, eleven of the top twenty Chekists belonged to the bourgeoisie—principally the bourgeoisie-intelligentsia; of the rest, one belonged to the landed gentry, three to the peasantry, two to the industrial proletariat, the remaining three being of undetermined social background. This overall preponderance of the bourgeoisie in the Vecheka's upper hierarchy is broadly in conformity with the distribution of social origins among the leadership in the Bolshevik and Menshevik Parties, and illustrates Lenin's maxim that political consciousness does not arise spontaneously within the proletariat, and 'can be brought to the workers only from outside'.[58]

It appears that not more than seven of these twenty Chekists were of pure Great Russian ethnic origin, and one of the seven, Ivan Ksenofontovich Ksenofontov (Xenofontov), may also have come of alien stock, judging by the Greek and Latin derivation—and indeed meaning—of his name and patronymic. The other thirteen Chekists were: four to six Poles (Dzerzhinsky, Menzhinsky,[59] Unshlikht, Messing, and maybe also Yagoda and Uritskii, who started his political life in Polish socialist organisations in the Ukraine);[60] three Latvians (Peters, Latsis, Eiduk); one Georgian (Bokii); one Armenian (Avanesov); one Ukrainian (Skrypnik); and one Azerbaijani Jew (Trilisser); as many as four of the six (two of them presumed) Poles were also Jews (Unshlikht, Messing, Uritskii, Yagoda).[61] If we take the larger sample of forty-seven Chekists, we find the following break-down: twenty-three ethnic Russians, five Russian Jews, five to seven Poles (four of them Jews), five Letts, three Ukrainians (one a

	Date of Birth	Joined Social Democratic Party	Ethnic Origin	Social Origin	Service in Political Police	Date of Death
Avanesov, V. A.	1884	1903	Armenian	Peasant	1918–1924	1930
Bokii, G. I.	1879	1900	Georgian	Bourgeois Intelligentsia	1918–1937	1937
Dzerzhinsky, F. E.	1877	1895	Polish	Landed Gentry Intelligentsia	1917–1926	1926
Eiduk, A. V.	1886	1903	Latvian	?	1918–1922	1938
Fomin, V. V.	1884	1910	Russian	Worker	1917–1921(?)	1938
Iakovleva, V. N.	1885	1904	Russian	Bourgeois Intelligentsia	1918–1919	1944
Kedrov, M. S.	1878	1901	Russian	Bourgeois Intelligentsia	1918–1922	1941
Ksenofontov, I. K.	1884	1903	Russian (of foreign origin?)	Worker	1917–1921	1926
Latsis, M. Ia.	1888	1905	Latvian	Farm Labourer	1918–1921	1938
Mantsev, V. N.	1888	1906	Russian	Bourgeois	1918–1922/3	1939

Menzhinsky, V. R.	1874	1902	Polish (Russified)	Bourgeois Intelligentsia	1919–1934	1934
Messing, S. A.	1890	1908	Polish -Jewish	Bourgeois Intelligentsia	1918–1931	1946
Moroz, G. S.	1893	1917	Russian	?	1918–1924(?)	1940
Peters, Ia. Kh.	1886	1904	Latvian	Farm Labourer	1917–1930(?)	1938
Skrypnik, N. A.	1872	1897	Ukrainian	Bourgeois	1918–1919/20	1933
Trilisser, M. A.	1883	1901	Azerbaijani-Jewish	?	1921–1929	1940
Unshlikht, I. S.	1879	1900	Polish -Jewish	Bourgeois Intelligentsia	1921–1923	1938
Uralov, S. G.	1893	1914	Russian	Bourgeois	1918–1920	1969
Uritskii, M. S.	1873	1897	Jewish (-Polish?)	Bourgeois	March-August	1918
Yagoda, G. G.	1891	1907	Jewish (-Polish?)	Bourgeois	1919–1936	1938
Average:	1883	1904				

Jew), two Armenians, one Georgian, and one Azerbaijani Jew. We shall return presently to this striking racial heterogeneity at the Cheka summit, a diversity that is also evident among the Chekist rank and file.

The death dates of our twenty leading Chekists form a significant pattern: four died of natural causes in the nineteen-twenties and early thirties (Dzerzhinsky, Menzhinsky,[62] Ksenofontov, Avenesov), one was assassinated in 1918 (Uritskii), one (Skrypnik) committed suicide in 1933 for political reasons, and just one (Uralov)[63] survived well beyond World War II. The remaining thirteen met their death in Stalin's purges, whether in the execution cellar or in a forced labour camp; most of them have since been rehabilitated, Yagoda being an obvious exception. If, again, we take the larger sample of forty-seven Chekists, we find that ten died prior to 1935; of the remaining thirty-seven, thirty-two died during 1936–46, and the great majority of them during the ominous period 1937–8; in practically every case we are informed that they were purged. Just one, Valobuev, is reported to have died of war wounds in 1942, and he, ironically, was an ex-Tsarist army colonel. Only five out of the thirty-seven survived beyond 1946, mostly living to a ripe old age, e.g. Voroshilov and Bulganin. The fact that Stalin's great purges were concentrated within the period 1936–8, whereas some of these Chekists reportedly died in the years 1939–46, proves nothing: Robert Conquest has pointed out that, in order to distract attention from the purges, it was at one time a common Soviet device to post-date the death dates of purge victims from 1936–8 to 1939 onwards, and more particularly to the war years 1941–5, so as to create the impression that they were killed in the war. Only gradually have their true death dates been revealed, emerging in new editions of encyclopedias, officially sponsored historical works, and the like[64]—hence the conflicting death dates of some of our Chekists.[65]

Of the thirty-seven Chekists alive in 1935, eleven were then still serving in the political police; only one of these, F. T. Fomin, survived the purges, quite miraculously considering that he was sentenced in January 1935 for negligence in connection with the murder of Kirov—all his NKVD colleagues sentenced with him perished in the purges. The havoc wrought in the ranks of state security organs by Stalin's purges has, on occasion, been frankly admitted by Soviet historians, though most of the blame has conveniently been laid on Beria, despite the fact that his appointment in 1938 to head the NKVD in place of Yezhov coincided with the abatement of Stalin's Great Terror. It was under Yezhov, in 1937, that 3,000 NKVD men

were executed.[66] And so we have an official history of World War II, published in 1965 by the Soviet Ministry of Defence, declaring:

> The struggle against enemy agents in the pre-war years would undoubtedly have yielded more tangible results if the State Security organs had not been transformed into agencies of mass reprisal. That came about because the Party's and the Government's control over these organs was gradually replaced by that of Stalin, whose arbitrary decisions often superseded the normal exercise of rule of law.
>
> The situation became even more critical when Beria's criminal bandits assumed command of the State Security organs. Sheltering behind Stalin's authority, these bandits eradicated Chekist traditions, destroyed honourable men, brought into State Security work an unaccustomed spirit of unfounded mistrust and suspiciousness towards Soviet people, encouraged lawlessness and careerist tendencies. Beria's anti-Soviet group was guilty of repressing the best part of those who had graduated in F. E. Dzerzhinsky's glorious school. Many thousands of Chekists suffered repression. Among them were ... Ia. K. Berzin, E. G. Evdokimov, M. S. Kedrov ... Ia. Kh. Peters ... and others.[67]

Among the top twenty Chekists we have included a woman, V. N. Iakovleva, previously mentioned as Chairman of the Petrograd Cheka during the opening phase of the official Red Terror; many other women served in the Chekas, sometimes in positions of seniority. The most eminent of these was E. D. Stasova, who, being then a full member of the Bolshevik Party's Central Committee, served part-time on the Petrograd Cheka's Presidium as the representative of the Petrograd Party Committee, presiding with Iakovleva over the implementation of the Red Terror in the Petrograd Region. Another woman Chekist, Vera Petrovna Braude, née Bulich (1890–1961), a descendant of the philosopher Chaadaev, was in 1918 Deputy Chairman of the Kazan Provincial Cheka.[68] Berta Aronovna Ratner, a Jewish student of psycho-neurology, born in 1896, joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917 and served in the Petrograd Cheka Presidium.[69] Elza Iakovlevna (or Elza Ulrikhovna) Grundman (1891–1931), a Lett, was the first woman to win the title 'Honoured Chekist' (*Pochetnyi Chekist*), besides holding the Order of the Red Banner.[70] A woman Chekist with an interesting background was N. A. Roslavets (1888–1957); an LSR delegate to the Fifth Congress of Soviets in July 1918, she publicly deplored the LSR Rising,[71] and later that year joined the Bolshevik Party, as well as the Moscow Cheka, serving as a Chekist from November 1918 to 1924. In May-June 1919, Mantsev, then deputy head of the M-Cheka, insistently proposed to the Moscow Soviet that Roslavets, who had been condemned to death by the LSR Party, should become a member of the M-Cheka Collegium, in which she duly served during

June 1919–1920.[72] In 1921 she was appointed chief of the Secret-Operational Department and Collegium member of the Ukrainian Cheka, then headed by Mantsev.[73]

No reliable inferences regarding the Cheka's lower levels of personnel can be extrapolated from the data available for the top twenty Chekists who, with their long revolutionary records and their predominantly bourgeois background, were certainly not representative of the distinctly proletarian Chekist rank and file. Peters observed that in the Vecheka's early days its commissars and investigators were almost exclusively of working class origin;[74] the first batches of Chekists were recruited from among workers, soldiers, and sailors.[75] However, no statistics are available regarding the social composition of the general run of Chekists, nor about their age structure, though it appears that some were recruited very young, even at the age of sixteen.[76]

We have already discussed the remarkable racial mix of the top twenty Chekists, a diversity which also characterised the leadership of the Russian socialist parties, though the pronounced Jewish element evident at the apex of the Bolshevik Party (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Krestinskii, Sverdlov, Sokolnikov, etc.) and, even more, of the Menshevik Party (Martov, Liber, Dan, Abramovich, etc.) and the Socialist Revolutionary Party (Gotz, Gershuni, Kamkov, Natanson, Steinberg, etc.),[77] was perhaps not quite so manifest at the Vecheka summit. This ethnic heterogeneity of the Old Chekists was therefore not an isolated phenomenon; furthermore, it applied also to the Vecheka's middle and lower strata, where we constantly find a foreign strain: Poles, Hungarians and Estonians, Armenians and Georgians, Finns, even Chinese, but above all Latvians and Jews in abundance. At a Politburo meeting held on 18 April 1919, Trotsky commented:

> that Latvians and Jews constituted a vast percentage of those employed in Cheka frontal units, executive committees in frontal zones and the rear, and in Soviet establishments at the centre; that the percentage of them at the front itself was a comparatively small one; that strong chauvinist agitation on this subject was being carried out among Red Army men and finding a certain response there; and that in Comrade Trotsky's opinion, a reallocation of Party personnel was essential to achieve a more even distribution of all nationalities between the front and the rear.[78]

A striking imbalance manifested itself particularly in the Ukraine, where in early 1919 the Chekas contained an extraordinarily high proportion of Jews: 75 per cent of the personnel of the Kiev Cheka, and seven out of its ten collegium members, were Jews.[79] For reasons of race and religion the numerous Jews living in the Pale of

Settlement in the Ukraine had long been treated as second-class citizens, with bitter experience of pogroms at Ukrainian hands. During the period following the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, as a direct result of the official policy of anti-Semitic discrimination, and with the rapid development of the social democratic revolutionary movement, Jews—especially those with education—became revolutionaries in numbers out of all proportion to the relative size of the Jewish population in Russia. Indeed, in 1903 Count Witte observed that 50 per cent of all Russian revolutionaries were Jews, attributing this phenomenon to the unjust treatment they received.[80] Just as, in the Ukraine, native Ukrainians were in the minority in the Chekas, so, after the Red Army's occupation of Menshevik Georgia in February 1921, very few Georgians were admitted to the Georgian Cheka, most of its personnel being Armenians, Jews, etc.[81] Very probably such discriminatory staffing sprang from a deliberate policy of using national minorities or aliens to perform the Chekas' disagreeable tasks, on the calculation that such detached elements could be better trusted not to sympathise with the repressed local population.

The Bolshevik régime disbanded the Tsarist army but retained the services of a number of Latvian rifle battalions which the German occupation of the Baltic provinces had left stranded in Soviet Russia. These battalions (later they became regiments) were largely recruited from men of worker-peasant stock; whilst their principal desire was to return to their native soil, they were prepared meanwhile to serve the Bolsheviks, whose broad social democratic slogans they found quite attractive, and who afforded them preferential treatment. The Latvian riflemen were well-disciplined, dependable soldiers, qualities which compensated for their indifferent Communist zeal and their ignorance of the Russian language. These hired mercenaries constituted a Bolshevik praetorian guard, which did so much to protect the régime before the emergence of the Red Army: they guarded Smolny and the Kremlin,[82] they participated in the liquidation of the Anarchist strongholds in Moscow in April 1918, they saved Lenin's government from defeat at the hands of the LSRs on 6–7 July 1918, they quelled peasant risings in August of that year, and generally proved themselves indispensable.[83] They also provided the Vecheka with a reservoir of talent to draw on. The guards and gaolers in the Lubianka offices and prisons were mostly Letts: the politician and historian, S. P. Melgunov, who himself spent many months in the Lubianka cells, affirmed that in 1919 three-quarters of the Vecheka's HQ staff of 2,000 were Letts.[84] So were various prominent Chekists,

such as Peters and Latsis, A. V. Eiduk and K. I. Lander, and so was the veteran Chekist, A. Ia. Pelshe, who served in state security organs during 1920–40, and rose to be a member of the Soviet Communist Party's Politburo as from 1966.[85]

Numerous Finnish soldiers served in the Vecheka's Combat Detachment in the early days. Finns guarded the prison in Petrograd's Peter and Paul Fortress in 1921.[86] Kingisepp, the Chekist investigator for important cases, was an Estonian. There were even Chinese Chekists serving in the Vecheka Troops and doing guard duty at Lubianka HQ.[87] A factor which contributed to the cosmopolitanism of the Chekas was the war against the Central Powers which shifted to Russia vast numbers of German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war[88] in whom Bolshevik proselytisers found a literally captive audience. The Tsar's Chekist executioners included several Hungarians, almost certainly ex-prisoners of war.[89]

The Poles exercised a remarkable continuity of top level control over the political police, extending from Dzerzhinsky and his stand-in, Unshlikht, to Menzhinsky, a span of sixteen years (eighteen, if we accept Yagoda as being of Polish origin).[90] A number of other Poles occupied senior posts in the Vecheka: S. A. Messing, a veteran SDKPiL revolutionary, headed the M-Cheka in 1920–2, and succeeded Trilisser as OGPU Second Deputy Chairman in 1929;[91] S. A. Mertens, another SDKPiL veteran, served in the Vecheka in 1918–19, and in 1920–1 officiated as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs in the Belorussian Republic, being also a member of that Republic's Cheka Collegium;[92] S. F. Redens, of working class origin like Mertens, and a Bolshevik since 1914, headed the Cheka in Odessa (1920) and in the Crimea (1921), and then successively commanded the GPU in the Crimea, in Georgia, and in the Ukraine, but fell foul of Beria and, although married to Anna Allilueva, sister to Stalin's second wife, Nadezhda, he too perished in the purges.[93]

This Polish pre-eminence in the Vecheka followed partly from the close connection between the SDKPiL and the Bolshevik Party, but also, indubitably, from Dzerzhinsky's dominating position in the political police. Dzerzhinsky surrounded himself with Poles. His secretary in the Vecheka in early 1918 was a Pole, Bronislav Bortnovskii,[94] who was severely wounded in the storming of the British Embassy building in Petrograd on 31 August 1918;[95] he subsequently achieved high office in Soviet Military Intelligence and in the Comintern.[96] One of Dzerzhinsky's two personal secretaries in the Vecheka in 1920 was the Pole, Stanislav Redens, mentioned above.[97] Dzerzhinsky's own Polish cousin, Roman Piliar (in Polish,

Pilar), who sometimes used the title Baron Pilar von Pilhau (he had Baltic Baron, as well as Polish gentry, blood in his veins) was recruited by Dzerzhinsky in 1920 into the Vecheka and became a notable Chekist.[98]

No special uniform was prescribed for Chekists, but they frequently wore black leather jackets, and carried revolvers in their bulging holsters, besides sometimes sporting ammunition pouches. Dzerzhinsky and his lieutenants usually appeared in photographs wearing military tunics, breeches, and riding boots. It does not seem that any special qualifications were required of Chekists, unlike militiamen who had to be literate, aged twenty-one or over, and entitled to vote in elections to the Soviets. Indeed there is clear evidence that Chekists were sometimes illiterate,[99] or aged well under twenty-one, whilst many of them, being foreigners, were presumably debarred from voting in Soviet elections.

In the chaotic circumstances of civil war, terror, famine, and devastation in which the Vecheka operated, there was little scope for the emergence of an organised caste system with built-in advantages for élites such as the Party, the Red Army, or the political police; that would come later, with a return to more stable conditions. But even so, the Vecheka could claim certain discernible privileges. It enjoyed a wide measure of exemption from military conscription,[100] yet it rated the same preferential status as regards food rations as did the armed forces.[101] Its position in the top hierarchy could be deduced from such indicators as the inclusion of the Vecheka Collegium among the narrow category of top brass entitled to drive around Moscow in motor cars.[102] At all events, as is evident from the controversy provoked by Chekist behaviour during the Red Terror, Cheka personnel regarded themselves as a class apart, the very incarnation of the Party's will, with power of life and death over lesser mortals, and acted accordingly. Chekists were encouraged in such attitudes by the Soviet leadership, to which the Chekas were indispensable in time of civil war and of continuing class conflict. So long as the Soviet régime remained under serious threat, external or internal, so long could the Chekas get away with, literally, murder. Zinoviev's encomiums ('today there are two forces—Communists of the Red Army and Communists of the Chekas; the latter should be the ornament and pride of the Communist Party')[103] and Lenin's repeated votes of confidence ('in this struggle the Cheka organs should become the weapon for the realisation of the centralised will of the proletariat')[104] could only confirm Chekists in the presumption that they represented

an élite body, the Party's chosen cohort, the vanguard of the vanguard.[105]

DZERZHINSKY'S CHEKIST LIEUTENANTS

What manner of men were Dzerzhinsky's immediate subordinates in the Vecheka, these products of the pre-1917 revolutionary struggle? W. H. Chamberlin, whose history of the Bolshevik Revolution has not been bettered, wrote with insight: 'The conditions under which a revolutionist lived, whether he was doing underground work in Russia or participating in the emigrant circles abroad, were admirably calculated to produce fanatics, saints, heroes, inquisitors and neurotics. In this grim crucible were being forged future Red administrators and managers of socialised industry, future commanders of the Red Army and officials of the Cheka.'[106]

Moreover, the post-October conditions under which these Cheka officials actually operated proved infinitely corrupting, and Dzerzhinsky was heard to complain: 'Only saints or scoundrels can serve in the GPU, but now the saints are running away from me and I am left with the scoundrels.'[107]

The brief biographical sketches that follow relate to six of Dzerzhinsky's closest and most prominent assistants in the political police, whom he himself would undoubtedly have numbered among its saints. His two principal lieutenants during the Vecheka's early period were those formidable Letts, Iakov Khristoforovich Peters and Martyn Ianovich Latsis (alias of Ian Fridrikhovich Sudrabs).[108] Each a farm labourer's son, born respectively in 1886 and 1888, they were accepted into the Latvian Social Democratic Party in 1904 and 1905. Their paths subsequently diverged, to meet again in 1918, when the two men became colleagues in the Vecheka.

At the age of nineteen Peters, then working in the Baltic port of Libau, participated in local strikes and disturbances sparked off by the Russian Revolution of 1905. Ferocious reprisals followed.[109] Peters was imprisoned for eighteen months and tortured; in 1918 he showed Bruce Lockhart his mangled finger nails.[110] Released in September 1908,[111] he arrived in London as an émigré in October 1909,[112] and there helped to found, in the summer of 1912, the Foreign Bureau of the Latvian Social Democratic Party.[113] In London he worked as a tailor's presser. Arrested on 22 December 1910 on suspicion of implication in the Houndsditch murders committed on 16 December by Latvian Anarchists, he was remanded in custody and stood trial, with several co-defendants, at the Central Criminal Court on 2-12 May 1911.[114] Peters pleaded that he had been confused with his

Anarchist cousin, Fritz Svaars, who was his double, and who had perished in the siege of Sidney Street on 2 January 1911, after violent involvement in the Houndsditch shooting affair. Peters claimed that he had spent the evening of 16 December virtuously at his lodgings, mending a mousetrap.[115] He was acquitted, despite the absence of a complete alibi. A recent historian of the Houndsditch murders and of the associated siege of Sidney Street, Donald Rumbelow, who enjoyed full access to the City of London Police archives, has come to the conclusion that Peters was 'the man who should have hanged for murdering three City of London policemen',[116] though other authorities dispute this verdict. Conceivably the attempted burglary of the Houndsditch jeweller's shop had been in the nature of a concerted Anarchist-cum-Social Democratic financial 'expropriation', undertaken to augment respective party funds, though such ill-paired political bedfellows seem incongruous. Alternatively, Peters may have participated in the attempted burglary without political motive, simply to oblige his cousin. Released from custody, Peters reverted to pressing clothes, and married an English girl, May Freeman.[117]

After the February Revolution, Peters returned to Russia in April/May 1917. He was elected to the Central Committee of the Latvian Social Democratic Party, which he represented in the Central Executive Committee of the Second Congress of Soviets, in Petrograd. As a member of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee, Peters played his part in establishing Bolshevik power.[118] A founder member of the Vecheka Collegium, he must be held accountable for much of the carnage perpetrated by the Vecheka, particularly at the height of the Red Terror when, during October 1918, he deputised for the absent Dzerzhinsky. He gained a reputation for mercilessly signing scores of death warrants.[119] A trouble-shooter like Dzerzhinsky, Peters was successively given charge of the security defences of Petrograd, Moscow, and Kiev in the critical summer of 1919. During 1920–2, he was a member of the Turkestan Bureau of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee,[120] and the Vecheka's plenipotentiary for Turkestan,[121] where he helped to suppress the Basmachi insurrection.[122] He remained a Collegium member of the Vecheka/OGPU,[123] and, as at 1929, he was nominally in charge of the OGPU's Eastern Department,[124] but increasingly devoted his attention to political and administrative work as Chairman (later merely member) of the Party's Central Control Commission, as Collegium member of the People's Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and its head for the Moscow Region, and as First Deputy Chairman of the Moscow City Soviet and of the Moscow Regional Soviet's Executive

Committee.[125] In early December 1937, Peters was arrested in Moscow[126] and perished on 25 April 1938.[127]

Latsis, too, was a seasoned revolutionary. In 1908, at the age of twenty, he embarked on a school teacher's career, but having attracted the Okhrana's attention on account of his revolutionary activity in the Latvian Social Democratic Party, he changed his identity in 1911 from Ia. F. Sudrabs to M. Ia. Latsis, and left Riga for the Caucasus. In 1913 he moved to Moscow, where he attended university. Arrested in 1916, and sentenced to four years of exile, he escaped en route to Siberia, and co-operated in the illegal printing of *Pravda* for the Bolsheviks in Petrograd. Latsis joined the Bolshevik Party and participated in the October *coup*. He headed the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee's Bureau of Commissars, and in mid-November 1917 became a founder-member of the NKVD Collegium, in charge of its Department of Local Government. On 20 May 1918, he was appointed to the Vecheka Collegium, of which he remained a member to the end of its existence, whilst continuing to sit on the NKVD Collegium. Soon after being held prisoner, alongside Dzerzhinsky, by the insurgent LSRs on 6–7 July 1918, Latsis in mid-July took command of the Cheka on the Czechoslovak front, also heading the 5th Army's Military Tribunal.[128] It was during the ensuing cataclysmic period of the Red Terror that Latsis made his notorious pronouncements on civil war being unrestrained by any rules of conduct, and on annihilation of the bourgeoisie as a class. On 2 April 1919, the Ukrainian Sovnarkom appointed him Chairman of the All-Ukrainian Cheka,[129] which proceeded to gain for itself and its branches an unenviable reputation for cruelty and for indiscriminate execution of prisoners. In mid-August the All-Ukrainian Cheka was wound up, consequent upon Denikin's occupation of most of the Ukraine. Later that month Latsis, together with Peters and Voroshilov, constituted the Military Council for the Defence of Kiev,[130] which however fell to the Whites on 31 August. Next Latsis directed the Vecheka's important Secret-Operational Department.[131] In early 1921, whilst still working for the Vecheka, Latsis took up a prominent post in the salt industry, and then became involved in other aspects of the Soviet economy.[132] From 1932 he directed the Plekhanov Economic Institute. Arrested in 1937, he perished on 20 March 1938.[133] He was posthumously rehabilitated.

Moisei Solomonovich Uritskii was born in 1873 into an Orthodox Jewish merchant family in the Ukraine. His mother wanted him to become a rabbi; instead, he drifted into Polish Social Democratic circles, and, after entering Kiev University in 1893, he joined a Polish

Socialist Party (PPS) group which merged into a wider Polish Socialist Democratic front. After graduating in law in 1897, Uritskii became a professional revolutionary,[134] experiencing the usual vicissitudes of arrests, imprisonments, and Siberian exile, alternating with intervals of revolutionary activity. As from 1903 he adopted a Menshevik stance. An émigré 'internationalist' during the war, he worked for Trotsky's newspaper *Nashe Slovo* and his periodical *Borba*. Returning to Russia in March 1917, he joined the Bolshevik Party in July 1917 with Trotsky's *Mezhraiontsy* group, and, at the Party's Sixth Congress (July–August 1917), he entered its Central Committee, in which he was however demoted to candidate-member status at the Seventh Party Congress in early March 1918. A member of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee, he participated in the October *coup*, and subsequently played a leading part in suppressing the Constituent Assembly. With the Left Communists, he opposed the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty.[135] Thereafter, he was Zinoviev's right hand man in Petrograd, in the post of Commissar for Internal Affairs in the Northern Region Commune, besides directing the important Petrograd Cheka. Although his attitude on terror and executions was, judged by prevailing Chekist standards, comparatively moderate, he was none the less a fiery Jacobin. Lunacharskii described him thus: 'What curses, what accusations were heaped on him! Yes, he was ferocious: he reduced them to despair by his implacability, by his vigilance ... he was the most terrible foe in Petrograd of the thieves and robbers of imperialism of all colours and all varieties.'[136]

Throughout much of his political life Uritskii followed an anti-Leninist course, and, had he survived Lenin, he would undoubtedly have been consigned, along with his patron Trotsky, to that refuse heap of history to which Trotsky had himself contemptuously consigned Martov.[137] Instead, by one of those ironies of history, an assassin's bullet assured him a niche in the Bolshevik pantheon. His untimely death, on 30 August 1918, coinciding with the attempt on Lenin's life, triggered off the Red Terror.

A Bolshevik of longer standing was Mikhail Sergeevich Kedrov. Born in 1878 into a wealthy bourgeois family, Kedrov studied law at Moscow University, but was expelled in 1899. Having joined the RSDRP in 1901, he became an enthusiastic revolutionary, organising an explosives laboratory, forming combat squads of armed workers, operating underground presses, etc. He spent most of 1902–5 in prison and Siberian exile, and was again in detention during 1907–11, including incarceration for two and a half years in a fortress prison.

In October 1912, he emigrated to Switzerland, where he studied medicine at the Universities of Bern and Lausanne. A talented pianist, he used to play Beethoven for Lenin. Returning to Russia in 1916 as Lenin's emissary, he served in the army as a doctor. Between the February and October Revolutions he co-operated with Dzerzhinsky in Petrograd, publishing Bolshevik newspapers for the troops.[138] On 23 November 1917, Kedrov became People's Deputy Commissar for Military Affairs, with responsibility for demobilising the Tsarist army.[139] On 18 May 1918, he was appointed Sovnarkom plenipotentiary for inspection of military establishments, and was sent to Archangel to impose Soviet order in that troubled region. After the Allied landing in Archangel on 2 August 1918, Kedrov was given command of the north-eastern front, with A. V. Eiduk as his deputy. Summoned to Moscow in September 1918, Kedrov was soon posted to the Vecheka,[140] taking charge of its Military Sub-Department, which on 1 January 1919 became the Special Department, and was soon directing the network of Cheka Special Departments (OOs) attached to Red Army formations. In this capacity Kedrov, who by 27 March 1919 had become a Vecheka Collegium member,[141] toured front line areas, cleaning up counter-revolutionary conspiracies and inspecting Cheka OOs on the southern front. However, in view of the critical military situation, on 18 August 1919, Dzerzhinsky, by order of the Party's Central Committee, took personal command of the Vecheka Special Department and its OOs.[142] Kedrov was meanwhile deputed to deal with the raging typhus epidemic.[143]

As at January 1920, Kedrov sat on the Vecheka and NKVD Collegia and headed the NKVD Department of Forced Labour.[144] In March 1920, he went to the Archangel and Murmansk region as a member of a commission charged with the investigation of crimes perpetrated by White Guard and Allied interventionist troops.[145] In effect this was a punitive expedition, lasting several months, and it earned Kedrov a reputation for extreme cruelty. As a reward for his services, Kedrov was dubbed an 'Honoured Chekist' and was presented with a piano.[146] In the spring of 1921, Kedrov, in the capacity of a Vecheka plenipotentiary, travelled south, inspecting Chekas in Kharkov, Rostov-on-Don, and in Azerbaijan. He subsequently worked at various times for the Commissariat for Communications, for VSNKh, Gosplan, the Procuracy of the Supreme Court of the USSR, the Red International for Sport, and in other administrative posts. He also engaged in medical, historical, and literary work.[147] In late 1938 he retired because of ill health;[148] his biographer stresses that Kedrov had suffered from a weak heart since

childhood,[149] but perhaps also relevant are reports from several sources indicating that in the immediate post-Civil War period he was afflicted by bouts of insanity, for which he was treated in an asylum. This derangement may have been connected with the sadistic reprisals instigated by Kedrov (and by his second wife, Rebeka Plastinina-Maisel) on his Chekist punitive expeditions.[150]

Nemesis overtook Kedrov on 16 April 1939, when he was arrested, perishing in prison on 2 December 1941.[151] He was one of the first 'victims of the cult of personality' to be rehabilitated, receiving prominent mention in Khrushchev's secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress: Khrushchev read out Kedrov's pleading letter from prison, assuring the Central Committee that he was not guilty of any of the crimes (such as being an *agent provocateur* of the Okhrana, or a spy) to which he was being pressed, under extreme torture, to confess. Khrushchev revealed that, although the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court found Kedrov innocent, he was nevertheless executed.[152]

Next we come to Dzerzhinsky's last two deputies, Unshlikht and Menzhinsky; they were both Poles, and in practice both functioned as acting chairmen rather than as deputy heads of the political police. Indeed, on 12 December 1922, when describing the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Vecheka-GPU's foundation, *Izvestia* referred to Unshlikht as 'currently the factual chief of the GPU'. Unshlikht was brought into the Vecheka from outside, in April 1921, to hold the fort for Dzerzhinsky as his deputy, Dzerzhinsky having just been burdened with additional responsibility for the Commissariat for Communications. Menzhinsky, who had briefly sat on the Vecheka Collegium in its earliest days, re-entered the Vecheka in September 1919 on a more lasting basis, and served a four-year apprenticeship before succeeding Unshlikht as Deputy Chairman in 1923. These two Poles, hand-picked by Dzerzhinsky, had both gained wide experience in substantial government posts before joining the Vecheka.

Dzerzhinsky's acquaintance with his junior by two years, Iosif Stanislavovich Unshlikht (in Polish, Józef Unszlicht—party alias Jurowski), went back a long way: they had both joined the SDKPiL in 1900, the year of its formation, Unshlikht's activity in the social democratic cause having begun already in 1896. Born in Mława in 1879 into a Polish-Jewish[153] intelligentsia family, Unshlikht completed his secondary education and an electro-technical course in Warsaw. Achieving membership of the Warsaw, Lódź, and national committees of the SDKPiL, in 1911 Unshlikht, along with Ganetskii and Radek, led the Warsaw party organisation's secession from the

SDKPiL émigré leadership in Berlin, dominated by Rosa Luxemburg. The secessionists' sympathies lay broadly with the policies of Lenin, whom Unshlikht first met in 1907, at the Fifth (London) Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party. Between 1902 and 1909, Unshlikht experienced repeated arrest and imprisonment, and spent the years 1913–16 in Tsarist gaols, ending in Siberian exile. After the February Revolution, Unshlikht became active in both the SDKPiL and the Bolshevik Party: admitted to the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet, he was elected in June to the executive committee of the First Congress of Soviets as a Bolshevik delegate, and in November to the executive committee of the Second Congress, this time as an SDKPiL representative. Detained briefly by the Kerensky government in the 'July days', he participated in the Bolshevik October *coup* as treasurer to the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee.[154] From mid-November 1917[155] to at least late 1918,[156] Unshlikht served on the NKVD Collegium, initially heading the departments for foreign citizens and finance.[157] When, in late April 1918, the Sovnarkom established the Central Collegium for Prisoners of War and Refugees, known as *Tsentroplenbezh*, attaching it to the Commissariat for War,[158] Unshlikht was put in charge of it. Meanwhile, in January-February 1918, he organised the defence of Pskov against the Germans. He opposed the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty.[159]

Unshlikht further demonstrated his political versatility by his participation, during February-April 1919, in the short-lived, Bolshevik-backed Government of the Republic of Lithuania and Belorussia, in which he served as People's Commissar for War and as member of its Central Executive Committee, besides sitting on the Central Committee of its Communist Party. He figured, in July–August 1920, in the equally ill-fated Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Poland, which was cast by the Bolshevik régime in the role of a prospective Soviet Polish government, a plan which aborted upon the Red Army's defeat at the gates of Warsaw.[160] He was also nominated a delegate of the Polish Communist Party to the First Comintern Congress in March 1919, making a speech in Russian, and submitting a report in Polish on the P.C.P.'s activity.[161]

In the course of 1919–21, Unshlikht served on Soviet Russia's western front in the capacity of Revolutionary Military Council member of a division, an army, and then of the entire front;[162] on the Russian Communist Party's instructions, he directed clandestine activity in enemy occupied territory and within the enemy forces.

Unshlikht deputised for Dzerzhinsky in the Vecheka-GPU from

April 1921 to the autumn of 1923, a fluid and politically delicate period in which, even after the suppression of the Tambov Revolt, insurrection was still rife, whilst the New Economic Policy opened the door to potentially subversive influences and visitors from abroad. On 3 November 1921, Unshlikht was additionally appointed chief of the Moscow Cheka, evidently upon the recommendation of Kamenev, Chairman of the Moscow Soviet.[163] Unshlikht left the political police owing to a difference of opinion with Dzerzhinsky.[164] Subsequently he held various high military and civil administrative posts: as member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, and director of supply for the Red Army (1923–5); as Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, and Deputy People's Commissar for the Army and Navy (1925–30); as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission for the USSR (1930–3); as Director of the Soviet Main Civil Aviation Administration (1933–5); and as Secretary to the Central Executive Committee of the USSR (1935–7). Ever since 1917, he had held membership of the Central Executive Committee of all convocations of Soviet Congresses. From the Party's Fourteenth Congress (December 1925) onwards, he was elected as candidate member of of the Communist Party's Central Committee, except for a break between the Sixteenth (June–July 1930) and Seventeenth (January–February 1934) Party Congresses.[165] Then came the customary fall from grace: Unshlikht was arrested in June 1937[166] and shot on 29 July 1938.[167] He has since been rehabilitated.

Unshlikht was a sombre and secretive figure. Apart from his eminence in the Cheka, there are references to his leading position in the Soviet military intelligence service,[168] and to his reputedly heading the intelligence service of the Comintern.[169] Boris Souvarine, who met Unshlikht at the Third Comintern Congress in June–July 1921, summed him up as 'cold, taciturn, reserved, committing himself as little as possible, as befitted his role as head of the Cheka'.[170] Less flatteringly, Trotsky described him as 'an ambitious but talentless intriguer'.[171]

Unshlikht's successor as deputy chief of the political police, Viacheslav Rudolfovich Menzhinsky (in Polish—Wiesław Mienżyński), came of a Russified Polish family; his father taught at the St. Petersburg Officer Cadet Corps, whilst Viacheslav himself, born in St. Petersburg in 1874, graduated in law at St. Petersburg University in 1898.[172] A revolutionary since 1895, he joined the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1902, siding with the Bolsheviks in 1903. After four months imprisonment in 1906, he spent the years 1907–17

in emigration. During 1907–11 he belonged to the Bolshevik Party's dissenting *Vpered* group.[173] In Trotsky's words: 'He had been in all the opposition movements in Lenin's day. He was with the Boycottists, was carried away by anarcho-syndicalism, and what not.'[174] He had even violently attacked Lenin in anonymous articles, signed S.-D., in the Paris émigré periodical *Nashe Ekho* in 1915, calling him 'a political Jesuit who for many years has adapted Marxism to his aims of the moment'.[175] Returning to Russia in July 1917, Menzhinsky, together with Dzerzhinsky, Sverdlov, and A. S. Bubnov, was delegated by the Bolshevik Central Committee to inspect and supervise the Party's Military Organisation, which had been involved in the abortive Bolshevik putsch of early July.[176] He also helped Dzerzhinsky to edit the Military Organisation's newspaper for soldiers, *Soldat*.[177] Made a Commissar by the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee on 25 October 1917, with responsibility for the Ministry of Finance,[178] Menzhinsky was nominated, on 30 October, Temporary Deputy People's Commissar for Finance,[179] becoming full Commissar on 20 January 1918.[180] In effect, though without the title, he had been acting as People's Commissar for Finance from the start, as I. I. Skvortsov (Stepanov), created People's Commissar for Finance on 26 October, had not been able to take up his appointment.[181]

Menzhinsky, whose Polish origin and recent co-operation with Dzerzhinsky no doubt predisposed the latter in his favour, may have been co-opted on to the Vecheka Collegium as early as 8 December (though this swift nomination remains unconfirmed),[182] and certainly figured in the Vecheka Collegium approved by the Sovnarkom on 7 January 1918;[183] aptly, he became chief of the Vecheka section for combating misconduct by bank personnel.[184] Politically, he adopted a Left Communist stance, opposing the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty.[185] When the Soviet Government moved to Moscow in mid-March 1918, Menzhinsky stayed in Petrograd, vacating his post as People's Commissar for Finance. On 9 March, he was elected to the Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet, being also appointed to the Petrograd Cheka Collegium.[186] However, he soon faded from the Cheka scene, serving as Soviet Consul-General in Berlin over the period April–November 1918.[187] Next, after participating in Soviet negotiations with Germany and with the Ukrainian Directory, Menzhinsky held the post of People's Deputy Commissar for Socialist and Military Inspection in the Ukraine during January–August 1919.[188]

In that capacity, Menzhinsky entered the Collegium of the

All-Ukrainian Cheka on 16 June 1919, by order of the Ukrainian Communist Party's Politburo.[189] The Denikin offensive was under way, on 31 August Kiev fell and the Ukrainian Cheka ceased to exist. On 15 September 1919, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party posted Menzhinsky to the Vecheka.[190] Two days later he joined the Vecheka's Special Department (OO),[191] in charge of which was Dzerzhinsky himself, with Pavlunovskii as his deputy.[192] On 1 February 1920, Menzhinsky became deputy chief,[193] and on 20 July, he succeeded Dzerzhinsky as chief of that increasingly important department,[194] since Dzerzhinsky's full-time services were required for the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Poland. By 23 July 1920, Menzhinsky was a member of the Vecheka Collegium, having special responsibility for maintaining contact with the Party's Central Committee.[195] He became chief of the Vecheka's Special Department for Frontier Protection (*Osobyi Otdel po Okhrane Granits*) upon its formation on 24 November 1920.[196] In July 1922, the Sovnarkom made him chief of the GPU's Secret-Operational Administration.[197] On 18 September 1923, he was appointed First Deputy Chairman of the newly established OGPU, with Yagoda as Second Deputy.[198] Trotsky scathingly described Menzhinsky's appointment as a case of *faute de mieux*.[199] On Dzerzhinsky's death in July 1926, Menzhinsky stepped into his shoes as OGPU Chairman, but owing to infirmity of health or purpose, he increasingly left the direction of the political police to his deputy Yagoda.[200] Elected to the Party's Central Committee at the Fifteenth (1927) and Sixteenth (1930) Party Congresses, Menzhinsky was passed over at the Seventeenth Congress in January–February 1934, presumably because of his deteriorating health. He died on 10 May 1934.[201] Servile to Stalin, he served him even in death: at the Moscow trial of March 1938, one of the charges brought against Menzhinsky's successor, Yagoda, was that of having poisoned Menzhinsky.[202]

As an émigré in Paris, Menzhinsky had cultivated the pose of a *fin de siècle* aesthete and cynic. A polymath, he dabbled extensively in poetry, philosophy, philology, painting, journalism.[203] A polyglot, he already possessed a fluent command of twelve languages when he joined the Vecheka in 1919, subsequently finding time to master four more: Chinese, Japanese, Persian, and Turkish. Dzerzhinsky praised his ability to handle staff, his good judgement, his power of penetrating analysis.[204] Nevertheless, Menzhinsky leaves the impression of a gifted dilettante and hypochondriac, languidly reclining on a divan in his elegantly appointed room in the Lubianka.[205] Trotsky, who despised Menzhinsky, described him as 'the

shadow of an unrealised man'.[206] Perhaps Menzhinsky's debility and compliance were precisely the qualities which earned him Stalin's favour.

These then were Dzerzhinsky's principal lieutenants: Peters, tortured by the Tsarist police and famed as Dzerzhinsky's ruthless stand-in at the peak of the Red Terror; Latsis, who preached and practised extermination of the bourgeoisie and of prisoners taken in the Civil War; Uritskii, who gained a reputation for ferocity in Petrograd; Kedrov, whose reason was probably unhinged by the terrible reprisals he directed; Unshlikht, the cold and calculating bureaucrat; and Menzhinsky, clever, perceptive, but pliant. None of these dedicated revolutionaries (among whom only Kedrov was an ethnic Russian) inspire much sympathy or admiration; only Uritskii seems to have hesitated—and that evidently for reasons of expediency—to apply mass unrelenting terror. Driven by doctrinal conviction, they appear immune to pity or self-reproach, unlike their conscience-striken chief who, in an unguarded moment, wept in remorse for the sea of blood he had caused to be spilled from the purest of motives.

Chapter XIII

Combating Conspiracies

> But the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of crushing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the rich, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must crush them in order to free humanity from wage-slavery; their resistance must be broken by force; it is clear that where there is suppression there is also violence, there is no freedom, no democracy.
>
> Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIII, pp. 88–9,
> *(The State and Revolution)*

The October Revolution established Lenin's 'dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry', i.e. rule of the Bolshevik Party in the name and ostensible interest of industrial and agricultural labour. Lenin had warned that resistance on the part of the dispossessed exploiting classes would be ferocious, necessitating their merciless suppression in the course of a bloody civil war. For the business of suppression, the dictatorship would require a special apparatus of state; in practice this special apparatus came to consist of the Red Army, the Vecheka, and the Internal Security Troops—replacing, respectively, the Tsarist Empire's armed forces, Okhrana, and gendarmerie. In Latsis's paraphrase: 'The victorious proletariat had to retain the state, that apparatus of coercion, an apparatus for implementation of proletarian dictatorship. From this flowed all the implicit consequences: the state had to construct special organs to suppress the vanquished class, the counter-revolution. The state had to have its own army and its internal security agency *[vnutrennaia okhrana]*.'[1]

The Vecheka's task of suppressing counter-revolution proved to be by no means as 'easy, simple and natural'[2] as Lenin had once, in a confident moment, predicted, relying on the numerical preponderance of the proletariat over the exploiting classes. For the Russian industrial proletariat was itself relatively small, and only a fraction of it had accepted Bolshevik Party discipline prior to 1917; the agricultural proletariat was huge, but, in so far as it was politically

conscious, its loyalty went very largely to the Socialist Revolutionary parties. Lenin's narrowly based régime had to contend, on the one side, with resistance from such vested interests as Tsarist officialdom, evicted landlords, the officer caste, and the bourgeoisie, and, on the other side, with hostility on the part of the socialist opposition parties, with peasant insurrection provoked by drastic food-requisitioning policies, and even with strikes and rioting by the harshly regimented urban workers.

Fortunately for Lenin, there was no rapport between the right and left wings of the political spectrum. Any SRs or Mensheviks who figured in Kadet- or monarchist-inspired conspiracies against the régime were isolated individuals or tiny factions representative only of themselves, and not of their socialist parties. This clear division makes it possible and convenient to examine separately the Cheka's concern, on the one hand, with counter-revolutionary conspiracies hatched by the *ci-devant* ruling classes, and, on the other, with resistance shown by the rival revolutionary parties—Anarchists, Left and Right SRs, and Mensheviks, and by the industrial and peasant masses (the Bolsheviks themselves did not always make such nice distinctions: they indiscriminately labelled the SRs and Mensheviks 'bourgeois counter-revolutionaries' when it suited their purpose). The present chapter is devoted to the first category of conflict, the next chapter to the second. In each category the review is necessarily compressed and selective.

Latsis tabulated the following statistics relating to 'counter-revolutionary' organisations (of both left- and right-wing political character) uncovered, over the period January 1918–July 1919, in just twenty provinces of central Russia:

Political hue	*1918*	*I-VII 1919*	*Total*
Kadet	20	8	28
'Black-Hundreds'[3]	68	39	107
Right SR	19	15	34
Left SR	5	45	50
Menshevik	12	6	18
Undetermined	18	157	175
Total	142	270	412

Latsis also listed 39 bandit and black-marketeer organisations dealt with by the Chekas during the above period. Additionally, under the heading 'insurrections suppressed', Latsis noted 245 such episodes

occurring during 1918, and 99 more over the first seven months of 1919, involving in their suppression 1,150 and 3,057 deaths respectively on the Red side and that of the rebels.[4] These 4,207 casualties totalled by Latsis in respect of 344 insurrections appear disproportionately small, bearing in mind that certain of these risings, such as the one in Izhevsk which lasted from 8 August to 7 November 1918,[5] were on a major scale.

STRIKE OF STATE EMPLOYEES IN PETROGRAD

The Vecheka had been formed specifically to deal with the mass strike of state employees in Petrograd, co-ordinated by the Union of Unions of Employees of Government Institutions. The strike was described by the Bolsheviks as 'persistent sabotage by the obdurate intelligentsia' and as a manifestation of 'bourgeois bureaucracy'.[6] Investigation of this strike was directed by Dzerzhinsky, initially under the auspices of the Military Revolutionary Committee, and subsequently through the Vecheka. On 22 December 1917, just two weeks after the Vecheka's formation, the Chekist Drugov, armed with a search warrant signed by Dzerzhinsky, raided the Union of Unions premises, arresting the thirty or so persons working there, including A. M. Kondratev, the strike co-ordinator, and seizing a quantity of documents bearing on the strike. Dzerzhinsky studied the documents and personally interrogated some of those arrested.[7] The strike was suppressed; on 2 March 1918, its formal investigation, carried out by the Investigation Commission of the Revolutionary Tribunal attached to the Petrograd Soviet, concluded with the release of Kondratev. This episode has been called the Vecheka's first case.[8]

PURISHKEVICH

From the outset, the Vecheka came upon clandestine military organisations which despatched ex-Tsarist officers to swell the Volunteer Army mustering in the south,[9] and which meanwhile prepared armed risings in Soviet cities, intended to coincide with the eventual approach of the White forces. Such was the monarchist organisation, *Russkoe Sobranie* (Russian Assembly), whose leader, V. M. Purishkevich, was arrested in Petrograd in November, prior to the creation of the Cheka. With thirteen of his associates, he appeared before a Revolutionary Tribunal sitting from 28 December to 3 January, and was sentenced to four years' hard labour, with conditional release after the first year served. In character with that lenient early period, Purishkevich was in fact released by Dzerzhinsky on 17 April 1918, on compassionate grounds, and was amnestied

altogether on 1 May 1918; he joined the White army and fought against the Bolsheviks until his death in 1920.[10]

UNION FOR DEFENCE OF COUNTRY AND FREEDOM

An outstanding early anti-Bolshevik organisation was Savinkov's Union for Defence of Country and Freedom (SZRiS).[11] Boris Savinkov,[12] a judge's son possessed of a dynamic personality, joined the Socialist Revolutionary Party in 1903, becoming a leading member of its terrorist Combat Organisation headed by Evno Azef. He directed several notable assassinations, killing the Minister of the Interior, Pleve (15 July 1904), and the Grand Duke Sergei (14 February 1905). Arrested in 1906, he was sentenced to death but escaped. Returning to Russia after the February Revolution, Savinkov became Kerensky's Deputy Minister for War, but, having been implicated in Kornilov's attempted *putsch*, he was dismissed by Kerensky and expelled from the SR Party. From now on, his would be a lone-wolf role, independent of binding political ties. After the Bolshevik October *coup* and the failure of General Krasnov's counter-bid, in which he played a prominent part, Savinkov joined Generals Alekseev and Kornilov who, with the backing of the Don Cossack Ataman, General Kaledin, were raising the Volunteer Army in the Don Territory. On their behalf, Savinkov came to Moscow in late January 1918, and then launched his own underground organisation, the SZRiS. Militarily this received General Alekseev's blessing, whilst politically it was associated with the liberal-conservative underground party known as the National Centre, but in essence it went its own independent way. However, the Vecheka came upon the tracks of the SZRiS, and on 29 May 1918 arrested thirteen of its conspirators in Moscow. Further arrests followed, notably in Kazan, as the Vecheka unravelled the skein of Savinkov's network, but the bulk of his organisation—which altogether numbered some 5,000 members, mostly ex-officers—survived, and mounted the ill-fated insurrections in Iaroslavl (6 July), Rybinsk (7 July), and Murom (8 July).[13] The SZRiS was extinguished, but in 1921 Savinkov was to found a successor to it, under the name People's Union for Defence of Country and Freedom (NSZRiS).

THE 'LOCKHART CASE' AND THE 'ENVOYS' PLOT'

Despite Latsis's assertion that, at a Vecheka Collegium meeting on 18 March 1918, Dzerzhinsky forbade the use of *agents provocateurs*,[14] the Vecheka not surprisingly had recourse to provocation methods right from the start; its founder-members, seasoned ex-revolutionaries,

had absorbed the arts and crafts practised by the Okhrana. Very early on, a Cheka Collegium member, Ilin, penetrated a counter-revolutionary organisation in Petrograd by posing as an aristocratic ex-officer seeking to join the flow of recruits to General Kaledin's army.[15]

A far more celebrated conspiracy, the so-called 'Lockhart Case', was similarly uncovered—and indeed largely inspired—by astute Soviet provocation; the Cheka's stratagem in this episode was publicly revealed by the Soviet authorities in 1965.[16] With professional acumen, Dzerzhinsky had sent two young Lettish ex-officers to Petrograd on a coat-trailing expedition. These two Chekists, Ian Buikis[17] and Ian Sprogis, assumed false identities and, feigning anti-Soviet sentiments, gained the confidence of Captain F. N. A. Cromie, R.N., D.S.O., Naval Attaché at the British Embassy in Petrograd, who operated an intelligence network,[18] his principal purpose being to blow up the Russian Baltic fleet if it was in danger of falling into German hands.[19] Cromie gave the two Letts a written introduction to Robert Bruce Lockhart, the British Agent (i.e. semi-diplomatic representative) in Moscow. On Dzerzhinsky's instruction Buikis, who used the name Shmidkhen, called on Lockhart on 14 August 1918,[20] accompanied by Colonel Eduard Berzin, commander of a Lettish battalion guarding the Kremlin,[21] who pretended that the Lettish troops were disaffected and unwilling to fight against the British interventionist force occupying Archangel since 2 August. To prevent such an occurrence, Lockhart on 17 August issued the Letts with several *laissez-passer* documents addressed 'to all British Military Authorities in Russia'.[22] Lockhart put the Letts in touch with a British Secret Intelligence Service (S.I.S.) representative, Sidney Reilly, who supplied Berzin with funds (1,200,000 roubles in all), and began to hatch an ambitious plan for an anti-Bolshevik *coup* by the supposedly disaffected Lettish troops in Moscow.[23] It is noteworthy that Soviet accounts of this episode distort and exaggerate the part played by Lockhart, and diminish Reilly's role. It is an open question to what extent Reilly's scheme was in actual fact inspired by Berzin's provocative suggestions; at all events Lockhart, as well as the French Consul-General, Grenard, and General Lavergne, head of the French Military Mission, categorically turned down Reilly's proposal as being 'dangerous and doubtful'.[24]

This double game of the Cheka was interrupted, on 30 August, by the assassination of Uritskii and the wounding of Lenin. The Cheka swung into action, storming the British Embassy building in Petrograd on 31 August, killing Captain Cromie when he offered

resistance, and suffering several casualties in the process:[25] the Chekist, Ianson, was killed,[26] and another Chekist, Bronislav Bortnovskii, was badly wounded.[27] At 03.30 hours on 1 September, Malkov, the Kremlin commandant, acting on Peters's orders, arrested Lockhart in his Moscow flat,[28] and delivered him to the Lubianka. There Peters interrogated Lockhart in an endeavour to establish his complicity in the attempt on Lenin's life, and even confronted him with Dora Kaplan. Protesting his diplomatic immunity, Lockhart was set free the same morning, only to be rearrested on 4 September, when he called on Peters at Lubianka No. 11 to plead for the release of his detained Russian *innamorata*, Moura.[29] From 8 September, Lockhart was kept confined in the relative luxury of the Kremlin; whilst there he briefly shared quarters with Shmidkhen, now in the role of stool pigeon. On 2 October, Lockhart left Moscow for Finland with a group of British and French personnel, to be exchanged for Soviet officials, including Maxim Litvinov, held in London.[30]

The anti-Bolshevik conspiracy, as reported in the Soviet press, consisted of two parts: the 'Lockhart case', involving Lockhart and Sidney Reilly in league with the Letts; and the 'envoys' plot', covering a much wider canvas, and based in the first instance on the revelations of René Marchand, former *Figaro* correspondent and trusted associate of the French diplomatic mission in Moscow. Marchand was sufficiently converted to Communism[31] to give the Soviet authorities an account—in the form of a letter addressed to President Poincaré, conveniently 'found' in a Cheka search—of a meeting he had attended on 25 August at the office of the U.S. Consul-General, de Witt Poole. The French Consul-General, Grenard, was also present, but not so Lockhart.[32] This secret conclave decided that, after the impending departure of the remaining Entente staff from Russia, sabotage, espionage, and other disruptive work would be directed by stay-behind Allied intelligence representatives: Sidney Reilly for Britain, Colonel Henri de Vertement for France, and Kalamatiano for the U.S.A. Bridges would be blown up on approaches to Petrograd, cutting off food supplies to the city, etc., etc.[33] The purpose of these plots was to bring down the Bolshevik régime and to provoke renewal of hostilities on Germany's eastern front.

That there was a considerable basis of truth in certain of the Soviet allegations emerges clearly from accounts subsequently written by Reilly[34] and by his S.I.S. colleague, Captain George Hill,[35] who were rewarded for their exploits with an M.C. and a D.S.O. respectively. That is not to say that the conspirators necessarily proposed—as

asserted by the Soviet press—to kill Lenin and Trotsky; more in character was Reilly's reported intention to march them trouserless, objects of derision, through the streets of Moscow.[36] Zinoviev and Dzerzhinsky reached hysterical heights of absurdity in a statement published in *Izvestia* on 5 September, alleging: 'The English and French are the real murderers of Volodarskii and Uritskii, and the organisers of the attempts on the lives of Lenin and Zinoviev. ... The vile stranglers of freedom are ready to commit any crime. They have murdered Comrade Uritskii because he brought together the threads of an English conspiracy in Petrograd.'

More to the point was *Izvestia's* allegation that 'representatives of the English and French Governments have entered into close contact with Tsarist generals ... with the Kadet Party ... and with the treacherous Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks'. Lockhart, who in early April had begun to establish a rapport with anti-Bolshevik groups in Moscow—from monarchists to Mensheviks[37]—had made contact in May 1918 with Savinkov's underground organisation, but was peremptorily ordered to discontinue this.[38] The French were less diffident, and in early July subsidised the National Centre political resistance organisation—closely linked with Savinkov and with General Alekseev on the Don—to the amount of 2,500,000 roubles; Lockhart himself added one million roubles in mid-July, without authorisation. A little later Lockhart and his French colleagues despatched a courier carrying ten million roubles, with promises of much more to come, to General Alekseev.[39] However, these secret subventions were probably not known to the Bolsheviks at the time.

The 'Lockhart case' and the 'envoys' plot' came up for open trial before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal in Moscow on 28 November 1918, lasting until 3 December and receiving wide coverage in *Izvestia*. Four of the principal accused, Lockhart, Reilly, Grenard and de Vertement, were outlawed *in absentia*, to be shot as enemies of the state if apprehended. Of the remaining accused, eight were pardoned, eight were committed to prison with hard labour for five years; only two were sentenced to death for spying, namely the U.S. citizen of Russian-Greek parentage, Xenophon de Blumenthal Kalamatiano, and a Russian officer in Soviet Government service, Lieutenant Colonel Aleksandr Fride (or Friede), who was executed on 14 December 1918.[40] Kalamatiano was twice taken out to be shot, in an endeavour to make him talk, and was each time temporarily reprieved.[41] On 13 April 1919, Lenin brought Kalamatiano's case up for discussion at a meeting of the Party Central Committee, which pronounced: 'In view of the possibility of using him as a hostage in

negotiations with the Americans, it has been decided not to shoot him for the time being, but to keep him in prison.'[42] In May 1920, Kalamatiano's death sentence was commuted; he was released in the summer of 1921, and returned to the U.S.A.[43]

The polyglot Sidney Reilly, described by Lockhart as a Jew from Odessa named Rosenblum, and as a Napoleonic character possessed of high ambition, superb courage, and a fertile imagination,[44] eventually came to a tragic end. He continued to participate in anti-Bolshevik crusades, allowed himself to be lured back into Russia in 1925 by the bait of a highly sophisticated OGPU-controlled resistance organisation known as the *Trust*, and disappeared into limbo.[45]

THE NATIONAL CENTRE

Another celebrated British Intelligence agent, Paul Dukes,[46] became involved with the National Centre *(Natsionalnyi Tsentr)* in 1919. This clandestine political and military organisation had emerged, in May–June 1918, as a pro-Entente breakaway faction of the German-orientated Right Centre group *(Pravyi Tsentr)*, which soon ceased to exist. Both the Centres were based on the outlawed Kadet Party, and were backed by conservative elements such as former industrialists and landowners.[47] The National Centre's military significance was enormously enhanced in 1919 by the threat posed to the Bolshevik régime by the advancing White armies: Admiral Kolchak on the eastern front, General Denikin in the south, and General Iudenich pressing on Petrograd from the west. The National Centre supplied the White armies with information on Red Army strength and dispositions, and prepared the ground for insurrections in the two principal cities.

The first Bolshevik crisis was precipitated by Iudenich's advance on Petrograd from Estonia in early May 1919. Defensive measures were improvised, with the Vecheka to the fore. On 8 May, Peters, until recently Deputy to Dzerzhinsky, was put in charge of the Petrograd Fortified Area.[48] In mid-May, Kedrov, then commanding the Vecheka's Special Department (OO), descended on Petrograd with a contingent of Chekists, in support of Peters.[49] Panic reached such proportions that Zinoviev proposed the evacuation of Petrograd, and Stalin was sent there to stop the rot, arriving on 19 May. In his telegram of 29 May to Stalin, Lenin pointed to the probability of widespread treachery behind the Petrograd front, and quite possibly in the front line itself.[50] On 31 May, Lenin's and Dzerzhinsky's signatures featured on the proclamation headed 'Beware of spies',

printed in *Pravda*, which opened dramatically: 'Death to spies![51] The White-Guard advance on Petrograd has clearly demonstrated that along the whole frontal zone, and in each sizeable town, the Whites possess an extensive organisation which is effecting espionage, treason, blowing up of bridges, insurrection in the rear, killing of Communists and of prominent members of workers' organisations.' The proclamation urged the people to be on their guard, and to maintain constant contact with 'Party Committees, with the Chekas, with the most dependable and most experienced comrades among Soviet workers'.[52]

On 14 June, a mass search of foreign mission premises, church property and bourgeois households was carried out in Petrograd, on Peters's orders, by Kedrov's personnel in conjunction with the Petrograd Cheka under F. D. Medved. Some 20,000 workers participated in the search, and a large quantity of arms was found.[53] On 13 June, two forts guarding the approaches to Petrograd—Krasnaia Gorka and Seraia Loshad—switched their allegiance to Iudenich, but were stormed and recovered on 15/16 June, under Stalin's direction. A similar rising in Kronstadt was averted by rapid countermeasures.[54] Iudenich was forced to retreat, but again threatened Petrograd in late October 1919. This time Trotsky was despatched to deal with the crisis. At his disposal was I. P. Pavlunovskii, Deputy Commander of the Vecheka OO, who, on Trotsky's orders, reportedly executed the top military staff responsible for the defence of Petrograd. By such drastic remedies the city was saved.[55]

In the meanwhile, the Vecheka OO and the respective OOs of Petrograd and Moscow had unearthed extensive National Centre conspiracies in the two cities. As a result of the capture, on 14 July, of two couriers crossing into Finland, the arrest took place in Petrograd, on 23 July, of the Kadet, V. I. Shteininger, who proved to be the National Centre's chief link with General Iudenich. Other arrests followed, including that of the Menshevik-Defensist, V. N. Rozanov, prominent in the clandestine organisation, Union for the Regeneration of Russia *(Soiuz Vozrozhdeniia Rossii*—SVR).[56] In Moscow, the National Centre's military organisation planned a rising scheduled (according to Latsis) for mid-October, aiming to seize the capital, or at least to paralyse it temporarily, so as to help Denikin's approaching army. The conspirators, who disposed of many motor vehicles, some armoured cars, and even artillery, and who could count on the support of three officer-cadet schools and certain military units, intended to capture Moscow's railway stations and telegraph offices, and to storm the Kremlin; they expected the peasantry in the countryside around

Moscow to come to their assistance. However, the Vecheka's Special Department (OO) struck first, on the night of 18/19 September, catching over 1,000 conspirators.[57] Dzerzhinsky's version of events, printed in *Izvestia* of 27 September, more modestly reported the arrest of about 700 out of a total of 800 military conspirators, all of them officers or officer-cadets.[58] This Cheka *coup* had resulted from a denunciation, in late August, by one of the plotters. An associated earlier *coup* had followed the chance interception and adroit security exploitation of a courier from Admiral Kolchak, carrying a large subsidy for N. N. Shchepkin, the National Centre's chairman. The latter was seized, on the night of 28/29 August, in the very act of receiving a courier from General Denikin. Found in Shchepkin's possession were a list of members of his organisation and invaluable intelligence reports on the Red Army's dispositions and strength on the southern front, ready for despatch to Denikin.[59] *Pravda* and *Izvestia* of 23 September named sixty-seven members of the National Centre, headed by N. N. Shchepkin and A. A. Alferov, who had all been executed by order of the Vecheka.

Furthermore, the National Centre's political and military organisations in Petrograd subsequently suffered serious loss through Cheka action, notably by the arrest of Colonel Liundekvist, recent chief of staff of the 7th Red Army, who had worked out and transmitted to Iudenich a plan of attack on Petrograd. Liundekvist had also planned a rising in Petrograd, which was to coincide with the arrival of Iudenich's forces on the outskirts of the city.[60]

Paul Dukes's intelligence network had played a significant part in these conspiracies. Dukes, operating for S.I.S. under the code-name ST 25, was based on Petrograd from late November 1918 to September 1919, sometimes using forged Cheka identity documents for cover.[61] He helped to finance the National Centre organisations in Petrograd and Moscow.[62] The intelligence which he transmitted by courier to British contacts in Finland, enabled Lieutenant Augustus Agar, R.N., to sink the Soviet cruiser Oleg on 17 June and two Soviet battleships on 17 August. Meanwhile, on 4 July, the British Cabinet had reluctantly concluded that, although no declaration of war had been made, a state of war nevertheless existed between Britain and Soviet Russia.[63] Eventually Dukes had to escape to Riga, as the Cheka hunt for him intensified.[64] For their services in the Russian theatre of war, Paul Dukes was knighted and Agar won the V.C.

THE TACTICAL CENTRE

It was not until 1920, well after the liquidation of the National Centre's military organisation and the execution of its principals, that the Vecheka uncovered the Tactical Centre *(Takticheskii Tsentr)*. In February 1920, the Vecheka arrested a group of 'counter-revolutionaries', two of whom, Professors N. N. Vinogradskii and S. A. Kotliarevskii, turned state's evidence and co-operated with the Vecheka, even to the point of acting as stool pigeons against their imprisoned colleagues.[65] The investigation was conducted by Agranov, a 'special plenipotentiary' of the Vecheka OO Department.[66] On 16–20 August 1920, the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal, chaired by Ksenofontov, Deputy Chairman of the Vecheka, with Krylenko prosecuting, heard the case of the Tactical Centre, a secret political front formed in February 1919 to bring together three existing right wing/liberal clandestine organisations: the Council of Men in Public Life *Sovet Obshchestvennykh Deiateli*—SOD), headed by D. M. Shchepkin and S. M. Leontev; the National Centre, headed by N. N. Shchepkin and S. E. Trubetskoi; and the Union for the Regeneration of Russia (SVR), led by Professor S. P. Melgunov. The SOD, which had emerged in 1917/18, represented industrialists and landowners, and stood for constitutional monarchy and restoration of private ownership; the National Centre was predominantly Kadet in orientation; the SVR, founded in March 1918, included left wing Kadets, Populist Socialists, and some SRs and Mensheviks of right wing persuasion. Although N. N. Shchepkin, who headed the National Centre, was also chairman of the Tactical Centre, the latter was not itself an active, operational organisation; it was rather an association of the leading spirits in the three underground organisations concerned, each of which preserved its independence. The Tactical Centre was a forum for interchange of political ideas, an attempt to attain a measure of consensus on a broad programme. Kadet policies predominated.

The Revolutionary Tribunal pronounced the Tactical Centre guilty of plotting the overthrow of the Soviet state with a view to establishing a military dictatorship under Kolchak and restoring the capitalist system. The sentences passed were mild, most of the accused being released immediately under an amnesty. The heaviest penalty, death, instantly commuted to ten years' imprisonment, was reserved for the four leading figures: Leontev, D. M. Shchepkin, Trubetskoi, and Melgunov. These four were convicted, *inter alia*, of having had contact with Paul Dukes (who allegedly visited Moscow in

June 1919 and offered N. N. Shchepkin a British subsidy of half a million roubles per month for the Tactical Centre organisation), with Azarevich from Kolchak's intelligence agency, and with Khartulari, chief of Denikin's intelligence service. In 1921, all those sentenced in this case were released under an amnesty.[67] In his speech for the prosecution, Krylenko stressed that all the Tactical Centre defendants belonged to the intelligentsia. Two further *causes célèbres*, the Tagantsev conspiracy and the Famine Relief affair, both similarly featuring the intelligentsia, occurred in mid-1921.

THE TAGANTSEV CONSPIRACY

In early June 1921, the Petrograd Cheka and the OO of the Petrograd Military District uncovered and destroyed the Petrograd Combat Organisation *(Petrogradskaia Boevaia Organizatsiia*—PBO), known after its leader, Professor V. N. Tagantsev, as the Tagantsev conspiracy.[68] The PBO, operating in the North and North West Regions, was preparing an armed rising in Petrograd; over two hundred of its members were arrested. Politically it spanned a wide ideological spectrum, ranging from LSR elements on the left to the Paris-based and Kadet-orientated Union for the Liberation of Russia *(Soiuz Osvobozhdeniia Rossii*—SOR) on the right. General Wrangel, having disengaged from civil war on Russian soil, had recently assumed command of SOR. The PBO had become affiliated to the SOR, as the latter's regional committee for Petrograd. Through Finland, the PBO maintained contact with the intelligence services of Britain, France, and the U.S.A., and with the Finnish security service. In April–May 1921, it had established liaison in Finland with General Elvengren, representative of Savinkov's organisation in Warsaw. Finance was provided by Kadet circles in Paris. Such, at any rate, was the Soviet version of the conspiracy.

The PBO was headed by a committee of three: Professor V. N. Tagantsev (involved in 1919 in the National Centre), ex-Artillery Colonel V. G. Shvedov, and Iu. P. German. It subdivided into several elements: a group of academics, including Professors N. I. Lazarevskii, rector of Leningrad University, and M. M. Tikhvinskii—it was this element which formulated the PBO's ideological programme; an officers' group, under Lieutenant Colonel P. P. Ivanov, which planned the proposed armed rising and operated intelligence sources within the Red Army and Navy; and the United Organisation of Kronstadt Sailors under M. A. Komarov. Komarov, like his principal lieutenants in Petrograd, was an ex-Kronstadt mutineer, infiltrated from Finland under an agreement concluded in May 1921

between Tagantsev and S. Petrichenko, chairman of the Kronstadt Provisional Revolutionary Committee, members of which had found refuge in Finland. To gain a broader democratic base for the PBO, Tagantsev co-operated with a socialist, Menshevik-inclined, but non-party group of 'plenipotentiary representatives of factories and plants'. The PBO made use of slogans familiar from the Kronstadt insurrection, such as: 'New and free elections to the Soviets', with a view to attracting radical support.[69]

The Cheka arrested the principal Tagantsev conspirators on 5 June 1921.[70] Between 10 and 20 July, many of them were moved into Petrograd's Shpalernaia Prison and kept there in strict isolation. The Chekist Agranov conducted their investigation.[71] On 1 September 1921, the Petrograd *Pravda* announced that, by decision of the Petrograd Provincial Cheka of 24 August, sixty-one 'active participants in a Petrograd conspiracy' had been shot. Names and brief biographical details of those executed followed; the list was headed by Vladimir Nikolaevich Tagantsev, Professor of Geography, non-party.[72] Represented in the obituary were members of the intelligentsia, naval officers, sailors who had fought in the Kronstadt mutiny, members of the bourgeoisie, workers, and peasants. The best-remembered name on the list is that of Nikolai Stepanovich Gumilev, renowned Acmeist poet and ex-husband of Russia's greatest poetess, Anna Akhmatova. Reputedly ensnared by an *agent provocateur*—though this has been denied by Nadezhda Mandelstam[73]—Gumilev was not arrested until 3 or 4 August;[74] his execution has been linked with stories of intercessions for his reprieve put to Lenin by Gorky or by Larisa Reisner.[75] Intercessions on behalf of Professors Tagantsev and Tikhvinskii were rejected by Lenin.[76]

THE ALL-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE FOR FAMINE RELIEF

By and large the Russian intelligentsia, which had welcomed the February Revolution, met the Bolshevik seizure of power with hostility or outright non-co-operation, as during the public service strike of November–December 1917.[77] Many members of the intelligentsia managed to flee Russia, constituting a significant proportion of the 'White emigration' abroad. Those 'intelligenty' who remained in Russia, tended to identify with the proscribed Kadet Party, or, if they entertained socialist sympathies, to maintain a critical, though not necessarily disloyal attitude towards the Soviet régime; others preferred to retreat into an 'inner emigration', standing aside from involvement in politics or state administration.[78] But when the Russian people, as distinct from the Soviet state, faced disaster,

this 'inner emigration' rallied to the national rescue, as in the crisis caused by the catastrophic drought of 1920, threatening more than 30 million people with famine in the Ukraine, the Crimea, the Caucasus, and the Volga and Ural regions.

The Soviet Government's Central Commission for Famine Relief, established already on 17 February 1921, proved unequal to the situation, and it became clear that effective succour could come only from outside war-ravaged Russia. In late June, a meeting of members of Moscow's alienated intelligentsia, headed by S. N. Prokopovich, his wife, E. D. Kuskova, and N. M. Kishkin (collectively dubbed 'Prokukish'), took the public-spirited initiative of offering their services to the Soviet Government in order to attract foreign aid. With Maxim Gorky in the role of intermediary, this group obtained Lenin's support and, as reported in the press on 21 July 1921, an All-Russian Committee for Famine Relief *(Vse-rossiiskii komitet pomoshchi golodaiushchim*—VKPG) was formally constituted by VTsIK decree;[79] Kamenev was its chairman, Rykov its vice-chairman, with Lunacharskii, Krasin, and Shliapnikov among its total of sixty-three members, the majority of whom belonged to the liberal but politically inactive intelligentsia. The VKPG appealed to the conscience of the world, paving the way for charitable foreign intervention; on 20 August, the Soviet Government concluded an agreement with the American Relief Administration (ARA), whereby the latter promised a massive supply of foodstuffs, to be distributed in famine areas by ARA representatives.[80]

Their objective thus achieved, the Soviet authorities promptly liquidated the VKPG, whose international 'bourgeois-capitalist' connections and suddenly achieved freedom to operate without restraint, had alarmed the Vecheka; from the start 'the Lubianka' was determined to destroy this nest of liberal intellectuals, and deviously prevented the departure for London of a VKPG delegation.[81] On 26 August, Dzerzhinsky and Unshlikht recommended to Lenin the arrest and search of VKPG Committee members. Lenin at first demurred, fearing repercussions abroad, but then, having reconsidered the Vecheka's proposals, he approved these.[82] That same day he wrote a detailed directive to Stalin, urging the Politburo to order the immediate dissolution of the VKPG by VTsIK decree, and to appoint a Chekist to administer its liquidation and to take over its funds. Its leading spirits were to be arrested or exiled from Moscow. The directive concluded: 'Foreigners are beginning to arrive; we must clear these Kukishes out of Moscow and put an end to their playing with fire.' On 27 August, the day of the dissolution of the VKPG by

VTsIK decree, the first contingent of ARA representatives arrived in Moscow.[83]

At the VKPG's session on 27 August, almost all its non-Communist members were arrested[84] by armed Chekists, and were consigned to the inner Lubianka prison. The news soon spread that the three eponymous protagonists of 'Prokukish' had been condemned to death.[85] By way of justification, *Izvestia* of 8 September featured a Vecheka announcement flimsily linking several VKPG members with Antonov's suppressed insurrection in Tambov Province, and with SR and White Guard activities.[86] Neither the Vecheka nor Lenin believed in the charges levelled against the VKPG. A senior Chekist conceded privately that the VKPG had committed no illegal act; its crime had been the magnetic attraction it exercised for the Russian public. Similarly, Lenin confided in December 1921 that the integrity of the VKPG had never been in doubt: the Soviet Government had been forced to liquidate it for purely political reasons. Nevertheless, it was only the intervention of Nansen and Herbert Hoover that saved Prokopovich and his colleagues from execution.[87]

THE AMERICAN RELIEF ADMINISTRATION

Lenin's unavoidable consent to large-scale relief operations by the ARA inside Russia posed problems for the Vecheka; here were numerous representatives of 'capitalist' America penetrating into Russia and mingling with its people, with consequent opportunities for subversion and espionage, which, in the imagination of the Vecheka, flourished as an inevitable expression of class war. Unshlikht recorded that the Soviet Government introduced 'precautionary measures protecting us from the exploitation of famine for politically hostile ends' and that Lenin himself carefully watched over ARA activities.[88]

One such prophylactic measure was the appointment of Aleksandr Eiduk, a Vecheka Collegium member during 1919–22,[89] to be the 'Plenipotentiary Representative of the RSFSR attached to all Foreign Relief Organisations'; a whole system of lesser liaison representatives responsible to Eiduk was created and attached to ARA, these liaison officers being selected from the ranks of the Chekas.[90] Their objective was not so much to assist the humanitarian work of ARA, as to guard against assumed espionage and subversion on the part of the 12,000 ARA personnel on Russian soil, 300 of them U.S. citizens, the rest being locally recruited Russians.[91] A security screening procedure was instituted, whereby the ARA submitted to Eiduk lists of prospective Russian employees, together with completed biographical questionnaires; after checking these, presumably against Cheka/GPU records,

Eiduk approved or vetoed the applicants, a typical veto being exercised against an applicant because he had served two years' detention in a concentration camp.[92] Since 1924, right down to the present time, the ARA has been portrayed by Soviet propaganda as an organisation staffed by U.S. intelligence personnel and geared to counter-revolutionary purposes which were foiled by Cheka vigilance,[93] but this portrayal altogether lacks substance. The state security organs characteristically suspected that the ARA's Russian staff must have been suborned or simply corrupted by capitalist contagion, and, after the close down of the ARA mission in the summer of 1923, many of these luckless people were arrested by the OGPU on suspicion of espionage.[94]

The degree of the Vecheka's interest in the ARA is illustrated by the ingenious lengths to which it went in order to secure certain papers carried by ARA American officials travelling by train from Moscow to Batum. On Vecheka orders, the Georgian Cheka elaborately simulated a bandit raid on the train, and robbed the passengers, thus acquiring the desired documents.[95]

COUNTER-ESPIONAGE—THE KRO

Almost from its inception, the Vecheka had been preoccupied with the problem of keeping watch on foreigners, a habit inherited from earlier Russian governments and technically perfected by the Soviet state. The Marquis de Custine observed on his visit to Russia in 1839: 'En Russie, le secret préside à tout: secret administratif, politique, social, discrétion utile et inutile. ... Tout voyageur est un indiscret.'[96] Comparably, a Vecheka circular instruction of 17 June 1920 warned: 'The arrival of foreign delegations and representatives and the restoration of foreign trade facilitate the penetration of enemy spies into Russia.'[97] The Vecheka kept a wary eye both on distrusted foreign visitors and on their Russian contacts, among whom were lawyers, economists, and other members of the bourgeoisie—the so-called 'byvshie liudi', i.e. 'former people' or 'have beens'. Many of these were pressed into service as Cheka informers.[98]

The Menshevik leader, Dan, and the American Anarchist, Alexander Berkman, have described the precautions taken by the Bolsheviks—and more specifically by the Vecheka—to ensure the isolation of the British Labour Delegation which visited Russia in May–June 1920 from any contact with critics of the Communist system; Chekists were attached to the visitors in the guise of interpreters and guides, and guards were posted at their hotel to check the credentials of callers.[99] Bertrand Russell, who independently

visited Russia at this time—and whom Dan whimsically called a 'Christian Communist'[100]—concluded: 'Bolshevism is a close tyrannical bureaucracy, with a spy system more elaborate and terrible than the Tsar's.'[101]

The Vecheka gave a high priority to investigation of foreign diplomatic missions; one of its early targets was Mirbach's German Embassy, installed in Moscow on 23 April 1918.[102] When, in May or June 1918, Bliumkin joined the Vecheka, he was posted as chief of the newly established counter-espionage section, in the department for combating counter-revolution headed by Latsis; his specific task was to effect intelligence penetration of the German Embassy.[103] In this sphere the Vecheka co-operated with the British; Captain George Hill of the British Military Mission, who had already gained Trotsky's confidence, later claimed to have organised a Soviet counter-espionage section to procure intelligence on the German missions and their secret service in Petrograd and Moscow. Hill commented: 'Our interception organisation worked well. We deciphered German codes, opened their letters, and read most of their correspondence without even being suspected.'[104] During August 1918, the Vecheka's attention was also concentrated on the British and other Entente missions, in the context of Allied intervention and of the 'Lockhart case' and the 'envoys' plot'.

The Vecheka's young counter-espionage section was the kernel of the future counter-espionage department, the KRO,[105] which emerged in 1921–2 in response to the real or imagined threat posed by the influx of foreigners owing to the normalisation of diplomatic relations and the development of trade with capitalist countries. The Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement was signed on 16 March 1921, a week after the announcement of NEP; on 18 March, Russia signed the Riga Peace Treaty with Poland (a preliminary treaty had been signed on 12 October 1920), and in the same month established friendly relations, and concluded trade agreements, with several other states. Except for a brief period, during 1921, when the Vecheka's Foreign Department performed that function, the KRO had responsibility for keeping watch on foreign embassies and trade missions, automatically regarded as nests of spies. During the twenties, the KRO, headed by A. K. Artuzov and his successive deputies, the Pole, R. A. Piliar, and the ambitious young Estonian, V. A. Styrne,[106] developed techniques for investigation of foreign missions, tracking their daily activities and supplying their cooks, chauffeurs, and other locally recruited staff.[107] The KRO practised the familiar methods of the counter-espionage game, including the lure of sex to get alongside their quarry. In May

1921, for instance, George Kitchin, a Finnish citizen of Russian origin, travelling from Moscow to Petrograd as a diplomatic courier, was approached in the train by an attractive young woman who turned out to be a Cheka agent, briefed to come between him and his diplomatic bag.[108] When this ruse failed, Kitchin was approached direct in Petrograd, in the summer of 1921, by the head of the Cheka's Finnish Section, who tried to recruit him to report on the Finnish Trade Delegation.[109]

Even before the introduction of NEP, Lenin grasped the security implications of political and economic détente; addressing a Party meeting on 26 November 1920, he alluded to the current negotiations for granting the U.S.A. temporary use of Kamchatka as a base against Japan: 'Concessions do not spell peace, they also are war, but in a different form which suits us better. Previously, war was fought with tanks, guns, etc., which impeded our work, but now war will be waged on the economic front. ... Undoubtedly, they will try to deceive us and circumvent our laws, but for that we have appropriate institutions: the Vecheka, the M-Cheka, Provincial Chekas, etc., and we are confident that we shall win.'[110]

Of prime concern to the Vecheka were the counter-revolutionary activities of the émigrés. With the ending of the Civil War and the evacuation of the White armies from Russian soil, the considerable concentrations of White Russians abroad afforded bases for anti-Soviet subversion and espionage. In his address of 5 July 1921 to the Third Comintern Congress, Lenin reckoned that this implacably hostile diaspora amounted to between 1½ and 2 million persons, constituting communities with their own political organisations of all hues, their own newspapers, and close links with foreign 'bourgeois' interests which financed their undertakings. In a sense, said Lenin, the open activity of such émigré groupings made it easier to keep track of them, and Lenin invited 'foreign comrades' to carry out systematic observation on these counter-revolutionary elements.[111] Meanwhile, already on 1 December 1920 Lenin had instructed Dzerzhinsky to devise means of neutralising the machinations of such émigré bodies, and ways of preventing the creation of émigré combat units capable of effecting trans-border raids into Soviet territory.[112] In prompt response on 5 December, Dzerzhinsky issued a secret directive ordering that 'for the detection of foreign agencies in our territories there be organised pretended White Guard associations',[113] their purpose being to penetrate the most hostile émigré groups and lure their agents back to Russia; this was the provocation gambit which would develop into the classic Soviet deception operations, *Sindikat-2*

and the *Trust*, master-minded by the KRO in the early 1920s. Dzerzhinsky's directive further proposed an increase in the number of hostages taken from among the relatives in Russia of prominent émigrés, and the formation of special detachments intended to carry out acts of terrorism against enemies of the Soviet state living on foreign soil.[114]

SAVINKOV

It was from an émigré base in Poland that Boris Savinkov operated, during 1921, his militant movement, the People's Union for Defence of Country and Freedom—NSZRiS,[115] so named after Savinkov's earlier SZRiS organisation, whose insurrections had foundered in July 1918; since then Savinkov had acted as Admiral Kolchak's representative abroad, procuring funds for the White armies. During the Polish–Soviet War of 1920, Savinkov became chairman of the émigré Russian Political Committee (RPC)[116] in Warsaw, and was instrumental in raising the Russian People's Army[117] which fought under Polish command. In January 1921, Savinkov created, out of the remnants of the RPC, his new anti-Soviet organisation, the NSZRiS, which recruited its adherents from among Russian prisoners of war in Polish camps. Savinkov concluded agreements for joint action with Petliura's émigré Ukrainian government and with Cossack and Belorussian groups in Poland. Through its Information Bureau the NSZRiS ran a clandestine network of agents in Soviet territory who provided intelligence (shared with the Polish Military Intelligence Service) on military, political, and economic matters, and prepared the ground for risings against the Soviet régime.[118] The skill of the Vecheka defeated this ambitious scheme.

In December 1920, Pavel Ivanovich Selianinov, also known as Aleksandr Eduardovich Opperput, crossed the Soviet frontier into Poland by stealth, bringing a suitcase full of secret documents; he was conveniently on leave from his post as deputy chief of staff of Internal Service Troops (VNUS) in Gomel, and claimed to belong to an anti-Bolshevik underground organisation. He was promptly recruited by Savinkov, and returned to his VNUS post, becoming one of Savinkov's most trusted operators on Soviet soil and providing the NSZRiS with important information on the Red Army. In all, he made four secret trips to Poland, which included three visits to Warsaw.[119] In reality he was an *agent provocateur*, with whose help the Vecheka succeeded in thoroughly penetrating the NSZRiS, in destroying its raiding detachments, and in identifying and arresting its agents inside Soviet territory: in late August 1921, *Izvestia* reported

the trial of forty-four such Savinkov agents.[120] In the general round-up by the Cheka, Selianinov-Opperput was himself notionally arrested in Minsk in May 1921;[121] his slanted account of the failure of Savinkov's NSZRiS venture and of his own participation therein was published in Berlin in 1922.[122] Clearly this publication was a work of Soviet propaganda, aimed at publicly compromising Savinkov and his allies; it represented one of the earliest 'disinformation' ploys operated by the Soviet security service. The impressive intelligence produced by Selianinov for Savinkov and his Polish and French sponsors had been fabricated or doctored by the Vecheka and the Red Army staff as part of a sophisticated Soviet deception game.

Armed with ample documentary evidence of Savinkov's subversive anti-Soviet activities based on Poland,[123] the Soviet Government on 4 July 1921 lodged a protest with the Polish authorities, which three months later formally undertook to expel Savinkov and his principal lieutenants; the latter left Poland on 28 October, preceded by their chief.[124] During the next few years Savinkov endeavoured to run a resistance movement in Russia from Prague, apparently with some success. However, in mid-August 1924 he slipped into Russia, was promptly arrested, and on 27–29 August stood trial before the Military Collegium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Court—an unbelievably rapid sequence of events. In dock he made a clean breast of his anti-Soviet sins, and expressed repentance. His death sentence was immediately commuted to ten years' imprisonment. On 7 May 1925, he reportedly committed suicide by leaping out of a Lubianka window. In the 1960s, the Soviet authorities permitted the publication of an account presenting Savinkov's capture as the culmination of infinitely complex and cunning maneouvres by the Vecheka/OGPU's KRO department headed by Artuzov; in this version Savinkov had been tricked into believing that he had at his disposal in Russia a combined NSZRiS and liberal-democratic underground organisation—which was, in reality, manipulated and largely manned by the OGPU. This masterly deception operation went under the code-name *Sindikat-2*.[125] The Soviet account, whilst possibly broadly true, still leaves unexplained the swift and uncharacteristic capitulation, and co-operation at his trial (the final session of which took place in open court, attended by foreign journalists, including Walter Duranty of *The New York Times*),[126] of so intrepid and implacable a foe of the Bolsheviks as Savinkov. However that may be, this extraordinary episode represented a political triumph for the Soviet régime and a striking success for Dzerzhinsky's apparatus.[127]

THE TRUST

The *agent provocateur* Selianinov-Opperput was to reappear as a *dramatis persona* in another classic OGPU deception operation known as the *Trust* (in Russian, *Trest*), initiated by the Vecheka. In early November 1921, A. A. Iakushev, a Soviet waterways official on a visit to Estonia, imprudently contacted there an émigré monarchist, which circumstance came to Vecheka notice. Arrested on 22 November, Iakushev admitted membership of an underground monarchist association, and agreed to co-operate with the Vecheka.[128] Thereafter, the Vecheka/OGPU devised its own monarchist organisation, known as MOR,[129] which it presented as operating under cover of one of the many commercial trusts flourishing under NEP; in actual fact its emissaries abroad were officers or collaborators of the KRO.[130] With consummate patience and skill, the KRO developed the *Trust* to the point where it notionally had sources and helpers in most Soviet departments of state, the OGPU included, and was able to procure information which won it the support of Polish, French, and Finnish intelligence services. The operation culminated in the ensnarement of Sidney Reilly, who incautiously entered Russia from Finland on 25 September 1925, confident in the ability of the *Trust* to protect him. He was seized by the OGPU, and his further fate is uncertain, but according to one Soviet account he was executed on 5 November 1925 under the Revolutionary Tribunal's sentence of December 1918.[131] The *Trust* was finally revealed to be a front for the OGPU when, on 13 April 1927, two of its members, Maria Zakharchenko-Shults and a Lett named Eduard Ottovich Staunits, fled to Finland from Russia and exposed the deceit.[132] A twist was added to the story when Major Talikowski of the Polish Intelligence Service identified Staunits as being the *agent provocateur* Selianinov-Opperput who had betrayed Savinkov's organisation in 1921. Nevertheless, Staunits won the confidence of General Kutepov, head of the monarchist movement in Paris, and returned secretly to Russia in late May 1927, supposedly to redeem himself by a terrorist suicide mission against the OGPU.[133] *Pravda* of 6 July 1927, in an interview with the deputy chief of the OGPU, revealed that Staunits had been hunted down and killed;[134] opinions differ regarding the genuineness of his defection and reported death.

The KRO had achieved two major *coups:* first, the destruction of Savinkov's disruptive organisation, crowned by the capture and propaganda-trial of Savinkov himself; next, the infiltration and manipulation of the émigré monarchist movement, culminating in the

capture of Reilly. In both cases the KRO had successfully deceived not only the émigrés, but also several Western intelligence services; it had also demonstrated, particularly through the dramatic exposure (by Staunits-Opperput) of the *Trust* as a Chekist charade, the hopelessness of any émigré attempt to operate agents inside Russia, over whose territory the OGPU evidently exercised total security control.

ESPIONAGE—INO

Little is reliably known about the early espionage operations of the Vecheka. However, already in late January 1918, Dzerzhinsky despatched a Cheka agent named A. F. Filippov, alias Arskii, abroad, apparently to Finland, to report on German activities and on the local political situation. Filippov was a bankrupt financial journalist, recruited by the Vecheka after he had volunteered information about a Kadet plot.[135]

Over the years of the Civil War, the Vecheka's attention was engaged by pressing priorities on the home front, but without wholly neglecting the foreign field. In early December 1920, Lenin complimented the Vecheka on its 'splendidly organised' counter-intelligence, regretting only that this did not yet extend to the United States of America.[136] A fortnight later, on 20 December, Dzerzhinsky, ordered the formation of the Foreign Department of the Vecheka,[137] known as INO (abbreviation of *Inostrannyi Otdel*), responsible for direction of intelligence work abroad. Early heads of INO are reported to have been Ia. Kh. Davtian,[138] S. G. Mogilevskii, a Jew who joined the Vecheka in December 1919,[139] and M. A. Trilisser,[140] likewise a Jew. An RSDRP member since 1901, Trilisser was serving in the Party's Central Committee *apparat* when, on 5 August 1921, he was posted, at Dzerzhinsky's request, to the Vecheka,[141] as chief of its Foreign Department, which he headed from 1921 until late 1929; in 1926, he was additionally appointed Second Deputy Chairman of the OGPU, under Menzhinsky and Yagoda. However, even in 1921, Trilisser already took a greater interest in his Vecheka Collegium duties than in INO, leaving the latter largely to his deputy, Styrne.[142]

INO's functions, particularly when more fully developed under the OGPU, included: acquisition of political, military, and economic intelligence on foreign countries, coverage and disruption of émigré organisations (for which the KRO also had a brief), and security supervision of Soviet officials stationed abroad. As Soviet Russia regularised relations and exchanged envoys with the outside world, so the Vecheka secured representation under cover provided by Soviet

diplomatic and commercial missions, favoured appointments being second secretary and attaché. These Cheka outposts were called (Legal) Residencies, and their chief a Resident. Where INO representatives and agents functioned abroad under false foreign identity papers, they were known as Illegal Residents and Illegal *Residentura* workers. It was not until the late 1920s that such Illegal Residencies began to be established; one of their purposes was to continue operating for the OGPU in case of severance of diplomatic relations and withdrawal of official Soviet representation.[143]

Some early examples of appointments under Legal cover were the following: the posting, in 1920 or 1921, of two Chekists to the Soviet Mission in Reval, Estonia, with a brief to report on local émigré activities, and to maintain security supervision over Soviet Mission staff;[144] the presence, in 1921, of the Cheka and Comintern agent Klyshko as secretary to Krasin, head of the Soviet trade delegation in London;[145] the Vecheka assignment, in 1921, of two Red Army officers, both Poles—Mechislav Loganovskii and Kazimir Baranskii (under the name Kabetskii)—as second secretaries in the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw;[146] and the introduction, in late 1921, of a Chekist under an assumed name into the Soviet Embassy in Ankara. Already by 1921, however, there was friction between the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) and the Vecheka concerning the latter's use of the former for cover purposes.[147] It is significant, in this context, that it was the Vecheka's Deputy Chairman, Unshlikht, who headed a commission appointed by the Politburo in November 1921 to lay down the personnel establishments and rates of pay in Soviet missions abroad;[148] state security influence was already making itself felt in the domain of foreign affairs.

THE COMINTERN CONNECTION

Clearly, as the Russian Communist Party's objective was to promote world revolution, it had an interest in achieving world-wide intelligence coverage. Conversely, in the context of 'capitalist encirclement', the Russian Party was vitally concerned to obtain information regarding any foreign threat or émigré initiative aimed against Soviet Russia. In both respects the international fraternity of Communist parties made a ready ally. There naturally existed a close connection between the Vecheka and the Communist International (Comintern), founded in Moscow on 4 March 1919. Dzerzhinsky, who represented the Russian Communist Party at the first three Comintern Congresses (though he could not have physically attended the second one, in July/August 1920, because of his presence on the

Polish front), and who represented the Polish Communist Party at the Fourth Comintern Congress in November/December 1922,[149] conveniently linked the Vecheka with the Comintern.

When, in the summer of 1919, Lenin instructed I. S. Reich (known in the Comintern as 'Comrade Thomas')[150] to establish a Comintern base in Germany, he referred him both to Dzerzhinsky—for the Vecheka to facilitate his clandestine mission—and to Ganetskii, who maintained a secret Party fund at Lenin's entire disposal. To finance Reich's enterprise, Ganetskii gave him the pick of a huge hoard of precious stones and other valuables, which had been seized by the Vecheka on Lenin's orders and deposited in the vaults of the Palace of Justice.[151]

Chekists were sent abroad on Comintern assignments: for instance, in November 1920, the Polish–Lithuanian Communist and kinsman of Dzerzhinsky, Roman Piliar, left his post as a Vecheka special plenipotentiary in order to work for Poland's underground Communist Party in Upper Silesia, returning to the Vecheka in 1921.[152] Another Polish Chekist, Stanislav Mertens, was sent to Poland on a similar assignment in late 1921.[153]

THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNIST PARTY'S INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS

The Foreign Department of the Ukrainian Cheka successfully penetrated Ukrainian émigré organisations in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Warsaw, and other émigré centres.[154] This was not the first Ukrainian intelligence agency to be active in hostile territory: during July–December 1919 there functioned, under S. V. Kosior's direction, the Trans-Frontier Bureau, known as *Zafrontburo,* of the Ukrainian Communist Party's (KP(b)U's) Central Committee; its purpose was to demoralise and disrupt by operating behind the enemy lines in the campaign against Denikin.[155] The Ukrainian Cheka contributed some of its best personnel for this task; in all, about 800 agents, many of them Chekists, worked underground for the *Zafrontburo.*[156] The *Zafrontburo* was doubtless derived from the 'special department for illegal work' established in June 1919, on Dzerhinsky's prompting, and attached to the Russian Communist Party's Orgburo, for the purpose of organising a network of stay-behind agents in enemy-occupied territory.[157] Following the Polish attack in April 1920, the KP(b)U's Central Committee established, on 21 May, a Trans-Border Department *(Zakordonnyi Otdel*—abbreviated to *Zakordot)* to direct Party underground reconnaissance and intelligence activity in Polish-occupied Ukraine and Wrangel-controlled Crimea; by mid-June its

chief, Feliks Kon, was able to report impressive *Zakordot* achievements to the KP(b)U.[158] In 1921, *Zakordot* was incorporated in the Ukrainian Cheka.[159]

SOVIET MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

Another intelligence agency, operating abroad in parallel with the Vecheka and its successors, was the Soviet Military Intelligence Service, concerning whose origins and early activities little has been divulged. Captain George Hill of the British Military Mission in Moscow has described how, in 1918, he assisted Trotsky in organising a military intelligence procurement apparatus for the purpose of reporting identifications and movements of German army units located in occupied Russian and Ukrainian territory.[160] This may have been the start of the Soviet Military Intelligence Service, believed to have been founded in 1918, probably as the Third Section of Trotsky's newly created Red Army. It is now the Chief Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff, known as GRU.[161]

The outstanding figure in the early years of Soviet Military Intelligence was Ian Karlovich Berzin (alias of Petr Ianovich Kiuzis, 1890–1938), a militant revolutionary of Courland Lettish peasant stock, who was reprieved after being sentenced to death at the age of sixteen for armed rebellion. Berzin figured as People's Deputy Commissar for Internal Affairs in the short-lived Soviet Latvian Republic of early 1919. Next he became a Red Army Divisional Political Commissar, and then, from August 1919 to November/December 1920, he served as commander of the Cheka Special Department (OO) of the Fifteenth Red Army, participating in the Soviet-Polish War. In December 1920, Dzerzhinsky had him transferred to the Registration Directorate *(Registrupravlenie)*, as the Military Intelligence Service was then known, of the Red Army's General Staff.[162] On 27 December 1921, Berzin became deputy chief of Military Intelligence, and headed it from 23 March 1924 until April 1935. After serving during 1935–7 as a Red Army commander in the Far East, and as senior Soviet military adviser (under the name Grishin) to the Republican Government in the Spanish Civil War, he was recalled from Spain and reappointed, on 9 June 1937, as chief of Military Intelligence, only to be arrested later that year and to perish on 29 July 1938 in Stalin's purges.[163]

PROVOCATION

The Vecheka's record in crushing political and military conspiracies against the Soviet régime was impressive. Had some of these plots not

been nipped in the bud, the régime would have been placed in grave peril. Their investigation and extirpation by the Vecheka were swift and efficient. The Vecheka was often, though by no means always, first put on the track of these underground organisations by a denunciation. Latsis was moderately correct in claiming that 'almost all the major conspiracies were uncovered through an indication from the people'.[164] Sofinov recites a list of conspiracies so uncovered.[165] Lenin, addressing the Seventh Congress of Soviets on 6 December 1919, stressed that 'bourgeois' plots were exposed not by chance but through denunciation on the part of peasants and workers.[166] From the very start, the Vecheka appealed repeatedly through the press to the public at large, and to the proletariat in particular, for co-operation in reporting any suspicion of counter-revolutionary activity.[167]

However, under Dzerzhinsky's guidance, the Vecheka was not content to play a waiting game, relying passively on a proletarian helping hand to bring conspiracies to light. Chekists very quickly learned to keep one step ahead of their quarry by resorting to the tactic of provocation, which indeed became standard Cheka practice, and a most effective one, as demonstrated early on in the Lockhart affair. In this, as in other techniques, the Vecheka modelled itself on the Okhrana, which had penetrated some of the main revolutionary parties—and especially the Bolsheviks—so competently through its *agents provocateurs*. Just as the Okhrana had encouraged the growth of revolutionary organisations—so long as these remained under the internal surveillance, and even partial control, of its penetration agents—so the Vecheka, through its under-cover operators, fostered conspiratorial counter-revolutionary networks where sometimes none would have otherwise existed, but which fulfilled a purpose by attracting and exposing anti-Soviet elements.

There is nothing surprising about the Vecheka's adoption of such Okhrana methods, since provocation is one of the classic gambits of counter-subversion and counter-espionage. The idealist Dzerzhinsky initially employed this ethically dubious ruse reluctantly, and, as already noted, in March 1918 formally forbade its use,[168] but under the pressure of events it was retained and brought by Chekists to a fine art. Imaginative and patient exploitation of *agents provocateurs* was responsible, as we have seen, for notable Chekist triumphs, as in the *Sindikat-2* operation against Boris Savinkov, and in the *Trust* double-game against the monarchists, both brilliantly concluded by the OGPU. Cheka penetration of anti-Soviet organisations was greatly facilitated by credulity and poor security on the latter's part.

Cheka provocation was also widely practised against smaller fry, such as black market dabblers and other minor miscreants infringing the all-encompassing Soviet regulations. One of the most notorious *agents provocateurs* of the Cheka (in this case, of the Ukrainian Cheka) was the self-styled 'Count Albert Pirro', who established himself in June 1919 as Consul for Brazil in Bolshevik-held Kiev. He flaunted his anti-Communist sympathies, and offered to issue Brazilian passports to persons wishing to escape from Soviet territory. Many such people were arrested, as was Pirro himself; eventually, after a month's investigation, the Ukrainian Cheka's Collegium sentenced Pirro and four others to death, though Pirro himself was spirited away by the Cheka. The case was widely publicised.[169] When Angelica Balabanoff, who deputised for Zinoviev as Ukrainian Commissar for Foreign Affairs, complained to Dzerzhinsky about Pirro's activities (this was prior to his arrest), Dzerzhinsky explained that Pirro was an *agent provocateur*. Shocked, Balabanoff told Lenin about the Pirro affair as an example of the Cheka's unethical methods; surprised at her innocence, Lenin remarked: 'Comrade Angelica, what use can life make of you?'[170]

Equipped with a vast and effective apparatus and given *carte blanche* in the use of unscrupulous methods, the highly professional Cheka operators, wielding both hammer and rapier, asserted their indisputable mastery over opponents of the Soviet régime.

Chapter XIV

Civil Liberties, Socialist Opposition, and Peasant Rebellion

> Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for members of one party—however numerous they may be—is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently.
>
> Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution*, written in Breslau prison, summer 1918, New York, 1940, p. 45

> Lenin, Trotsky, and their companions have already become poisoned with the filthy venom of power, and this is evidenced by their shameful attitude toward freedom of speech, the individual, and the sum total of those rights for the triumph of which democracy struggled. ... In what way does Lenin's attitude toward freedom of speech differ from the same attitude of a Stolypin, a Pleve, and other half-humans? Does not Lenin's government, as the Romanov government did, seize and drag off to prison all those who think differently?
>
> Maxim Gorky, in *Novaia zhizn*, Petrograd, 7(20) November 1917[1]

The Bolsheviks' negative attitude to the concept of democracy and civil liberties—the freedoms of secret ballot, speech, press, assembly, etc.—followed directly from Lenin's doctrine of class struggle, a struggle which could only be won for socialism through the harsh dictatorship of the proletariat, entailing denial of freedom and justice to the former oppressor classes and their allies. 'Democracy', 'freedom', 'justice' were relative terms to Lenin, to be interpreted according to their application in the class struggle: constitutional democracy was a capitalist trap;[2] freedom was solely for the proletariat; justice was valid only when it was revolutionary. Moreover, Lenin stood for Bolshevik monopoly of power, consigning all other political parties, revolutionary ones included, to ultimate extinction. Reviled by Lenin as basically bourgeois and counter-revolutionary, deprived of civil rights, harassed by the Chekas, imprisoned and even executed, the Anarchists, Left and Right Socialist Revolutionaries, and Mensheviks were systematically eliminated from the political arena, leaving the Bolsheviks sole masters of the Soviet state. The socialist opposition was superfluous;

Lenin was explicit on the confrontation of forces: 'Who is not with us is against us. People independent of history is a fantasy. ... No one needs them.'[3] Faithfully echoing his master, Latsis the Chekist wrote: 'In the desperate contest between two worlds, the bourgeois one and the communist one, there is no third way; he who is not with us is against us, he who is not on this side of the barricades, has indeed, willingly or unwillingly, placed himself on the other side.'[4]

By destroying the middle ground of liberalism and intermediate socialism, Lenin polarised the conflict, posing the stark alternative of Revolution versus Reaction, with the Bolsheviks as self-appointed guardians of the Revolution, its defenders against armed White Reaction. For socialists the Revolution (albeit not its communist implementation) remained sacred, and they feared lest, by combating the Bolsheviks, they might betray it to hated Reaction. Hence the Mensheviks' chosen role of loyal opposition; hence also the Right SRs' renunciation of armed resistance after June 1919; even the LSR Rising was directed not against the Bolshevik 'revolutionary' régime but against Bolshevik abandonment of 'revolutionary' war on Imperial Germany. The socialist parties, whilst deploring the communist system with all its injustices, were even more strongly opposed to its apparent alternative—the triumph of the White armies in the Civil War.

As shown by the vote for the Constituent Assembly, the socialist opposition parties commanded substantial majority support among the population; this support doubtless diminished in early 1918 while the peasants were enjoying their newly appropriated land and the urban proletariat relished the brief experiment of workers' control, but it grew again upon the introduction of grain requisitioning and other unpopular measures of War Communism. Lenin must have been haunted by fears of a concerted mass peasant revolt provoked by the SRs and LSRs, fears also of a rebellious proletariat subverted by the Mensheviks. In this regard the socialist parties represented a potential threat to Lenin far graver than did the politically discredited forces of the right; fortunately for him the peasantry, although generally hostile to the Bolsheviks, preferred them, as the lesser evil, to the restoration of the dispossessed landlords by the Whites; fortunately, too, the differences between the socialist parties proved greater than their common antipathy for the Bolsheviks. At all events Lenin took no chances: from mid-1918 onwards his increasingly effective instrument for dealing ruthlessly with these troublesome heretics, these insidious breeders of disaffection, was the Cheka apparatus.

THE PRESS

Lenin's Decree on the Press, passed on 27 October 1917, described the press as being no less lethal than machine-guns and bombs; it sanctioned the closure of newspapers inciting to crime, encouraging resistance to the Workers' and Peasants' Government, or causing alarm and despondency by distortion of facts.[5] Although supposedly exceptional and temporary in character, this decree took firm root; it proved to be no more 'exceptional' than the Vecheka was 'extraordinary'. The Bolsheviks had in fact started settling accounts with the bourgeois press even before completing their *coup d'état:* on 25 October, the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC), through one of its commissars, S. G. Uralov (a future prominent Chekist), suppressed the liberal newspaper *Obshchee delo*, arresting its editor, V. L. Burtsev.[6] Vladimir Burtsev, though now a liberal, was a veteran revolutionary of the People's Will era who had earned a reputation for exposing Okhrana spies inside the Russian revolutionary movement, notably (in 1908) the notorious Evno Azef, who had penetrated the SR Party, and had even headed its terrorist combat organisation.[7] Ironically, Burtsev was now one of the first casualties of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Lenin in power had no patience with opposition, whether written or spoken. Trotsky recalled how, in the early days of the new régime, Lenin exclaimed: 'If we do not know how to shoot white-guard saboteurs, then what sort of a great revolution is this? Just look how our bourgeois riff-raff writes in the press. Where is this dictatorship? It is just a lot of talk and a mess.'[8] When the Mensheviks complained that their newspapers were being suppressed, Lenin commented: 'Of course they are, but unfortunately not the whole lot as yet! Soon they will all be closed down. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat eradicates this shameful sale of bourgeois opium.'[9]

Lenin's measure authorising governmental control over printing facilities was adopted by VTsIK on 4 November, and on 19 November the MRC established a Supervisory Commission for the Press, continuing all the while to suppress newspapers hostile to the Bolshevik régime. Upon the dissolution of the MRC in early December, the Vecheka presumably inherited its function of press supervision; certainly in its founding resolution the Vecheka was instructed to 'devote prime attention to the press, to sabotage, etc.'

A decree of 18 December 1917 established a Revolutionary Tribunal on the Press, attached to the main Revolutionary Tribunal, to try cases of misuse of the press or crimes against the people

committed by press organs; such offences were punishable by fines or closure of the offending newspaper.[10] On 24 January 1918, an LSR, Shreider, proposed to the Sovnarkom that the Tribunal on the Press, which happened to be an LSR stronghold, should take over from the Vecheka, and from other investigation commissions, the responsibility for dealing with crimes pertaining to the press; the Sovnarkom rejected the proposal and ruled that, whilst the Tribunal on the Press punished the actual press organs, the Vecheka and other state agencies had the right to arrest individuals who had committed counter-revolutionary actions through the press media.[11] However, to assist the Revolutionary Tribunal on the Press, an investigation commission was attached to it by decree of 28 January 1918, to look into complaints, and to institute preliminary action such as arrests, searches, confiscations, etc., this action being effected by the Red Guard, the Militia, etc.[12] Subsequently, under the decreee of 17 May 1918, the Revolutionary Tribunal on the Press lost its separate identity.[13]

A Vecheka resolution, published in *Izvestia* on 22 March 1918, described local Chekas as competent to combat 'misuse of authority and of the press'.[14] *Izvestia* of 27 March announced that all newspapers were required to send three copies of each issue to the Vecheka, on pain of closure.[15] To supplement this measure, on 7 April the Bureau for Combating Misuse of the Press, attached to the Vecheka (as part of its Information Department),[16] requested all local Soviets to send to Vecheka HQ, at Lubianka 14, copies of every issue of local periodicals, brochures, and leaflets, whatever their political complexion.[17] Similar bureaux for dealing with misuse of the press operated at local Cheka level, under departments for combating counter-revolution.[18] On 28 April, the Vecheka resolved to ask the Moscow Soviet to 'reconsider its decision' and to hand over all matters relating to misuse of the press to the Vecheka, as being 'the best informed and technically most competent organ for the appropriately thorough and speedy implementation of essential measures'.[19] The Sovnarkom, VTsIK, and the Party's Moscow Committee gave the Vecheka their support, and VTsIK directed it to carry out the VTsIK Presidium's decision of 11 May to close down newspapers 'spreading panic among the population and arousing discontent with Soviet authority'.[20] Measures against the counter-revolutionary press were discussed at the First Conference of Chekas in mid-June 1918.[21]

In the course of 1918 the opposition press was progressively silenced. Between 10 and 14 May, a large number of Moscow and Petrograd newspaper were suppressed or fined, including the SR

paper *Zemlia i Volia* and the Menshevik *Novyi Luch*.[22] Maxim Gorky's independent, Menshevik-orientated paper, *Novaia zhizn*, which scourged Lenin and his party, was finally closed down on 16 July.[23] On 4 August 1918, the remaining 'bourgeois' press was suppressed on account of its alleged anti-Soviet agitation.[24] Henceforward socialist party newspapers appeared intermittently, on sufferance.

The extent of the Vecheka's subsequent involvement in supervision of the press is not clear; it did not figure in the VTsIK decree of 16 May 1919, by which the control of paper supply to newspapers and periodicals was centralised within the department of state publishing—*Tsentropechat*—to which was attached a special commission composed of representatives of the NKVD, of *Tsentropechat*, and of the Political Department of the *Revvoensovet*.[25] That the Chekas did maintain an interest in press censorship, even after the end of the Civil War, emerges from the Smolensk Party Archives: in 1921 the Smolensk provincial branch of ROST, the Russian Telegraph Agency, submitted a daily summary of material about to be published to the Smolensk Provincial Cheka for approval.[26]

Nor was the sphere of private mail censorship neglected. A Sovnarkom decree of 10 February 1921, signed by Lenin, authorised the interception of postal and telegraphic correspondence addressed to, or emanating from, individuals under investigation, such interception being effected by state agencies, notably by the NKIu and its provincial departments, the Revolutionary Military Tribunals, and the Vecheka and its organs.[27] However, Soviet postal interception had been in operation long before,[28] in the best Tsarist tradition.

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Though Soviet decrees might proclaim freedom of conscience and of religious belief, there is no doubt that Lenin looked to the eventual destruction of the Russian Orthodox Church, and to the eradication of organised religion. His immediate objective—the disestablishment of the rich and influential Russian Orthodox Church—was swiftly implemented. The decree of 23 January 1918[29] effected the separation of church and state, and forbade religious instruction in schools; it also nationalised all Church-owned property (Church land had already been nationalised under the Decree on Land, of 26 October 1917). The clergy were disenfranchised under the RSFSR Constitution of 10 July 1918.[30] They took their place alongside the bourgeoisie and the opposition revolutionary parties in the prisons and concentration camps run by the Chekas; they often figured in lists of

hostages executed during the years of the Red Terror. One such cleric was Archpriest Vostorgov, who met his end as one of a group of important hostages executed in Moscow in early September 1918.[31] The Vecheka had already made considerable anti-clerical propaganda out of his case by publicising in a series of *Izvestia* articles in June 1918 the story of Vostorgov's involvement in a compromising property transaction.[32]

In 1920, Patriarch Tikhon calculated that, to the best of his personal knowledge, 322 bishops and priests had been executed since the beginning of the Revolution; he emphasised, however, that these figures were far from complete.[33] According to another estimate, 28 bishops and 1,000 priests of the Orthodox Church had perished by 1923.[34]

A specific role was assigned to the Vecheka in relation to the Orthodox Church and its clergy. In 1918, this responsibility lay within the competence of the Vecheka's Department for Combating Counter-Revolution, whose head, N. A. Skrypnik, interrogated Archbishop Barnabas and obtained from him a grovelling assurance of his full co-operation with the Bolsheviks.[35] In due course this department became the Secret Department, whose duties included coverage of the revolutionary parties and other opposition groups. In 1921, the Third Section of the Secret Department had several informants living in the house of Patriarch Tikhon,[36] who in 1922 was placed under house arrest.[37] The Vecheka's concern with invigilation of religious organisations is evident from the presence of one Chekist on the three-man boards *(troiki)* established to enforce the decree on separation of church from state.[38]

THE ANARCHISTS

The Anarchists were the first party of the left to meet the Vecheka in armed confrontation. Primarily a disruptive force, they had proved a useful minor ally to Lenin in his assault on the Provisional Government. After the October *coup*, however, as Lenin's emphasis shifted increasingly to consolidation of power in a centralised state, so the Anarchists' pursuit of unrestricted liberty became, to the Bolsheviks, an irritant. A collection of disparate groups rather than a cohesive party, the Anarchist camp attracted to its black banner criminal elements, as well as political terrorists and idealistic theorists. The Anarchists imposed a rule of violence in Moscow where, in mid-April 1918, the Cheka stormed their strongholds; Peters claimed that only 5 per cent of those arrested were ideological Anarchists.[39] The Cheka also struck in Petrograd, and on 30 April the NKVD ordered

provincial Soviets to disarm all Anarchist detachments and organisations.[40]

Although never officially outlawed by decree, nor arraigned in public trial,[41] the Anarchists were subjected to intermittent harassment, and their press to periodic closure.[42] It was in a spirit of revenge that, in 1918, the Anarchists planned to plant a bomb in the Vecheka Collegium conference room, timed to explode when the Collegium was in session; involved were a Vecheka commissar and a secretary. Peters recalled this as the only case (other than the LSR Rising) of treason within the Vecheka.[43] Some Anarchist groups in the cities went underground and established loose contact with Anarchist battle detachments in the south.[44] The 'Underground Anarchists'' bomb attack of 25 September 1919 on the Communist Party's Moscow Committee headquarters in Leontevskii Pereulok, killing twelve and wounding fifty-five Party members attending a plenary session,[45] provoked severe Cheka reprisals, though these were not initially directed at the Anarchists.

In the Civil War, the Anarchists, whilst utterly repudiating the Bolsheviks' suppression of freedom, nevertheless co-operated with them fitfully against the White cause, and sometimes with such zeal that in August 1919 Lenin observed that many of them were 'becoming the most dedicated supporters of Soviet power'.[46] A number of Anarchists even joined the Vecheka,[47] among them Aleksandr Ge or Gay (real name Goldberg), a VTsIK member who died fighting the Whites in the Caucasus.[48] Another Anarchist-turned-Chekist was M. B. Brener;[49] yet another was T. P. Samsonov.[50] But the Anarchist ideal of unfettered political liberty was too directly opposed to the regimentation of the dictatorship of the proletariat for any lasting accord to be possible between the two ways of life. The Anarchists' dilemma was clearly expressed in the history of Nestor Makhno's anarchistic peasant movement in the Ukraine; when Denikin or Wrangel appeared to be in the ascendant, Makhno made common cause with the Red Army, only to assert his independence fiercely when the White threat subsided. In November 1920, after Wrangel's final defeat in the Crimea, the Ukrainian Cheka arrested leading Anarchists in Kharkov, including Makhno's political mentors Volin (pseudonym of V. M. Eikhenbaum), Aaron Baron, and Baron's wife Fania. Simultaneously, senior Anarchists were rounded up elsewhere, and were committed to the Butyrki and Taganka gaols in Moscow. A further Cheka haul of Anarchists followed the outbreak of the Kronstadt Mutiny in March 1921.[51]

A book entitled *Persecution of Anarchists in Soviet Russia*,

published in Berlin in 1922, listed in detail the casualties inflicted by the Cheka upon politically active Anarchists: 38 executed or died in prison; 108 still in detention; 181 exiled abroad.[52] These figures do not, of course, take into account the many thousands of peasant Anarchists killed in the suppression of peasant insurrections. Executed by the M-Cheka in late September 1921 were Fania Baron and Lev Chernyi, convicted on a trumped up charge of currency counterfeiting contrived through Chekist *agents provocateurs*. Chernyi was the pseudonym of Pavel Turchaninov, Anarchist political worker and poet, who had suffered *katorga* and exile under the Tsarist régime.[53]

THE LEFT SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARIES

The history of the LSRs after their *débâcle* of 6 July 1918 was one of fragmentation and progressive repression. Most of the leading participants in the July *putsch* were tried *in absentia* and sentenced, on 27 November, to three years in prison with hard labour; however, Maria Spiridonova and Sablin, who both stood trial, received sentences of only one year's imprisonment, and were promptly amnestied. In theory, the LSR Party continued to function legally, and LSRs who repudiated the July *putsch* were entitled to sit in VTsIK and in the Soviets, but in practice they were squeezed out systematically; Lenin encouraged this two-faced tactic by unofficially urging the wholesale arrest of LSRs and their elimination from the Soviets.[54] At the Sixth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, convened in early November 1918, the LSR Party could muster only four (non-voting) delegates, and none at all at the Seventh Congress in early December 1919.

Shortly before her trial, Spiridonova had written, in an open letter addressed to the Bolshevik Central Committee: 'And now your Cheka. In the name of the proletariat you have wiped out all the moral achievements of our Revolution. Things that cry aloud to heaven have been done by the Provincial Chekas, by the All-Russian Cheka. A bloodthirsty mockery of the souls and bodies of men, torture and treachery, and then—murder, murder without end, without inquiry, on denunciation merely, without waiting for proof of guilt. ...'[55]

Upon her release, Spiridonova rallied the remnants of her shattered party, and in December 1918 she presided over an All-Russian LSR Party conference which unanimously voted to re-establish freedom of the Soviets through re-election of all Soviet officials, and to abolish the Cheka and the death penalty. In the course of a spirited propaganda campaign, Spiridonova denounced the Bolshevik Red Terror, identifying specific atrocities and naming the Chekas respon-

sible.[56] Reacting sharply, the Bolshevik régime intensified its stranglehold on the LSRs. On 10–11 February 1919, some 200 LSRs, including Spiridonova and Steinberg, were arrested and imprisoned in Butyrki gaol;[57] many more were incarcerated in other Moscow gaols such as Taganka and Lefortovo.[58] It was alleged that the LSRs were preparing another insurrection. On 24 February, the Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal pronounced that, in view of her 'morbidly hysterical condition', Spiridonova should be isolated from political and public activity by detention in a sanatorium.[59] Instead she was confined, under constant watch, in a partitioned corner of a Kremlin guardroom, from which the LSR underground Central Committee adroitly engineered her escape, on 2 April 1919, with the aid of one of her Chekist guards, a twenty-two-year-old peasant.[60]

Spiridonova spent the next nineteen months in hiding, hunted by the Cheka, but engaging in unremitting underground party activity—venturing into the countryside to attend secret peasant conferences, corresponding with her supporters in the provinces, and writing articles for the illegal press. Disguised as a peasant woman, and holding false identity papers, she successfully ran the gauntlet of the house-committees,[61] the street round-ups, the swarming Cheka informers. The LSR Party ranks were decimated by arrests, and the surviving members had to be on the alert for Cheka *agents provocateurs*. As Steinberg observed: 'The Cheka tried sending spies among the LSRs. They often came from the provinces, with letters of recommendation, apparently in order, from branch organisations. These provincial organisations were set up by the Chekas themselves, and the papers were forged.'[62] Eventually, in late October 1920, Spiridonova was re-arrested when prostrate with typhus in Moscow, and henceforward she would remain under perpetual police supervision, whether in a Cheka infirmary, in prison, or under house arrest.[63]

Despite the toll taken by the mass arrests of February 1919, the LSRs remained in a combative mood. The Moscow Cheka claimed to have unearthed fourteen LSR counter-revolutionary organisations during the period December 1918 to 1 November 1920.[64] Over the first seven months of 1919, a total of forty-five LSR organisations were uncovered by Chekas in just twenty provinces of Central Russia.[65] In March 1919, there was serious unrest in Petrograd, involving strikes at the Putilov works and in other industrial undertakings; the Soviet press alleged that these strikes were inspired by the LSRs.[66] On 10 March, a mass meeting of 10,000 Putilov workers passed a resolution, which opened:

We, the workers of the Putilov works, declare before the labouring classes of Russia and the world that the Bolshevist Government has betrayed the ideals of the revolution, and thus betrayed and deceived the workers and peasants in Russia; that the Bolshevist Government, acting in our names, is not the authority of the proletariat and peasants, but a dictatorship of the Bolshevik party, self-governing with the aid of the Cheka and the police. ... We demand the release of workers and their wives who have been arrested; the restoration of a free press, free speech, right of meeting, and inviolability of the person; transfer of food administration to co-operative societies; and transfer of power to freely elected workers' and peasants' soviets.[67]

Describing these events, *Izvestia* reported that fighting had broken out between striking workers and Red Army soldiers, and in the shooting a number of people had been wounded.[68] The strike was suppressed and the Cheka went to work, holding summary trials. Many executions followed, taking place in a remote locality called Irinovka, near the fortress of Schlüsselburg. The procedure was to line the victims up against a wall, blindfolded, and to shoot them down, sometimes in batches by machine-gun fire.[69] In principle Lenin was not opposed to repressing, if need be, misguided members of the proletariat. In February 1920, he told an audience of Chekists:

Both before and after the October Revolution we took the view that the birth of the new order was impossible without revolutionary violence. ... History has shown that without revolutionary violence it is impossible to attain victory. Without revolutionary violence, directed at the outright enemies of the workers and peasants, it is impossible to break the resistance of the exploiters. And, on the other hand, revolutionary violence cannot be withheld from use also against wavering and irresolute elements among the working masses themselves.[70]

The Bolsheviks were likewise prepared to shoot the political oppositional leaders of the working masses. On 18 March 1919, the same number of *Izvestia* which reported the industrial disturbances in Petrograd also carried an article by Dzerzhinsky, warning that, in view of the serious subversive activities of certain LSRs and Mensheviks who were in effect making common cause with the White Guards, the Vecheka would henceforward draw no distinction between the White Guards of the General Krasnov variety and those from the Socialist camp: 'the punishing hand of the Chekas will fall with equal weight upon the heads of the one and the other. Left Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks arrested by us will be considered hostages, and their fate will depend upon the behaviour of both parties.'[71]

Dzerzhinsky's proposal was put into effect. Steinberg, held prisoner in Butyrki, read in *Vechernaia Moskva* a government pronouncement:

'Spiridonova, Steinberg and other leaders of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks declared hostages.'[72] In response, on 27 March the illegal LSR Central Committee passed a resolution, addressed to the Vecheka, declaring that the latter would be held fully responsible for the life of each imprisoned LSR.[73] The Cheka expert on LSR affairs, Romanovskii,[74] was clearly disconcerted by this menacing turn of events. Shortly afterwards Abram Gotz, the Right SR leader, who had suffered Tsarist *katorga* with Dzerzhinsky, received a visit from the latter in his cell. Dzerzhinsky was at pains to assure Gotz that the government announcement categorising Socialist detainees as hostages had never been intended seriously.[75] Nevertheless, Latsis, by then chief of the Ukrainian Cheka, issued a statement on 15 June 1919, threatening that if the slightest molestation befell any Soviet worker, then all 'activist' Socialist Revolutionaries held in Ukrainian or Russian prisons would be executed.[76]

Most of the LSRs arrested in, or since, February 1919 were kept in prison indefinitely, though 34 LSRs were released by Vecheka decision on 21 June 1920.[77] A wave of arrests followed the Kronstadt Rising of March 1921; one of the very few LSR leaders to miss imprisonment at that time was Steinberg, who was presently permitted to leave Russia. Despite their systematic persecution, the LSRs suffered relatively few casualties: according to a count taken by the LSR Party in 1922, 26 LSRs had been executed, 4 had died in prison, and 51 were still in detention.[78] However, these figures presumably did not include the anonymous rank and file who also suffered repression. This comparative leniency may have reflected the extent to which the LSRs, more than any other socialist party, were prepared to travel along the road to Communism; it may also have indicated the low opinion in which the realistic Bolsheviks held the efficacy of this party of poets and idealists, aptly dubbed 'the Don Quixotes of the Revolution'.[79]

The Vecheka kept a close grip on the remnants of the LSR organisation still at liberty, and clearly achieved a measure of agent penetration; a Vecheka circular of 1 June 1920 instructed: 'Once more we remind you that it is essential to despatch all arrested LSRs to Moscow, immediately after completing their preliminary investigation. Here we shall exploit them to the full, and, as has happened on a number of occasions, we shall secure among them new valuable collaborators for Provincial Chekas.'[80]

An Odessa Provincial Cheka 'top secret' report on that Cheka's activity during 1920, issued in February 1921, likewise stressed the

need to secure informers within the oppositional political parties.[81] Recruitment of agents within the socialist parties had in fact been practised by the Chekas virtually from the start, despite the high-minded decision taken by the Vecheka Collegium on 17 February 1918 not to use informers against political opponents—a decision which Dzerzhinsky extended on 18 March 1918 into a general prohibition of the use of provocation by the Vecheka.[82] Latsis proudly quoted this decision as proof that Chekists did not act on the adage that the end justified the means. Cheka provocation methods are exemplified by an incident occurring during the trial in Moscow, in June 1922, of seven young LSRs. A GPU investigator, Deribas, who had been present at their arrest, was called to give evidence. One of the accused unexpectedly identified Deribas in court as a man who had once introduced himself to her in Riazan as an LSR, under another name.[83] In 1921–4, Terentii Deribas acted as deputy to T. P. Samsonov, head of the Vecheka's Secret Department (responsible for dealing with political opposition organisations), in which post Deribas succeeded him in 1924.[84]

The Vecheka's resort to unprincipled methods against the socialist parties is illustrated by its advice given in the circular of 1 June 1920, quoted above: 'In general, with regard to political anti-Soviet parties, the state of martial law should be exploited by proceedings against members of these parties as speculators, counter-revolutionaries, persons misusing their authority, wreckers of the internal front, damagers of the military front, or for making common cause with the Entente and its agents.'[85]

The LSRs were also persecuted in the Ukraine, where the Ukrainian Cheka arrested all those attending an LSR (internationalist) party conference in March 1920 and, the following September, those attending the Third Congress of the Ukrainian LSR (internationalist) Party, the Congress having voted in favour of overthrowing Soviet authority by exploiting peasant insurrection. The more prominent and active LSRs were committed to a concentration camp until the end of the Civil War.[86] In March 1921, the entire central committee of the Ukrainian LSR (unification) Party and a large number of other LSRs were arrested; however, members of both wings of the party were released in late 1921, upon undertaking not to oppose Soviet rule by violence.[87]

The LSRs must bear a heavy responsibility before history for having assisted the Bolshevik seizure and retention of power through their participation: in the October *coup d'état*; in the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly; in the Soviet coalition government up to

March 1918; and in the Vecheka, until July; by these significant actions they condoned and actively abetted the Bolshevik dictatorship.

THE RIGHT SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARIES

In terms of popular support, the Right SRs presented the strongest threat to the Bolshevik régime. Had they been prepared to back their commanding majority in the Constituent Assembly by force of arms, they might even have swept the Bolsheviks aside: at that moment they could count on the support of two Guards regiments in Petrograd.[88] As it was, they maintained a dwindling presence in the Soviets and in VTsIK until their expulsion from these bodies by VTsIK decree of 14 June 1918,[89] on grounds of having fomented insurrections against Soviet authority, and of co-operating with the Czechoslovak Corps and the White generals. The Right SRs did indeed co-operate with the Czechoslovak Corps, under whose protective wing they established, on 8 June, short-lived democratic governments in Samara and in Omsk, in partnership with Populist Socialists, Kadets, and Mensheviks. Previously, they had already been involved in brief insurrections, as in Saratov on 16 May where, participating alongside mutinous Red Army troops, they called for a Constituent Assembly and for re-election of the Soviets.[90] Just before the Allied landing at Archangel on 2 August, the Right SRs in concert with Populist Socialists formed the Supreme Administration of the North. In September, they joined with other political groups to found the All-Russian Provisional Government, known as the Directorate, in Ufa, Siberia; however this was overthrown in mid-November 1918 by Admiral Kolchak, who assumed supreme authority. These various SR-sponsored democratic governments all perished through inner dissension, even before their territories were threatened by the Red Army.

The Right SRs became scapegoats for the assassinations of Volodarskii and Uritskii, and for the attempt on Lenin's life, though genuine evidence of Right SR Party involvement was lacking. In Moscow only one Right SR perished in Cheka reprisals,[91] but in Petrograd and elsewhere there were many Right SR casualties: in Astrakhan, fifteen leading SRs were shot in September by order of the notorious Chekist, Atarbekov.[92] A number of prominent Right SRs and Mensheviks, including Rafail Abramovich, who were held in Moscow's Butyrki gaol, escaped execution by a hair's breadth. On the day following the official announcement of the Red Terror, their fate was discussed in the Bolshevik Central Committee; Trotsky, Stalin, and others were in favour of shooting them, urging that no exception

should be made for the Socialists, whilst Lunacharskii, Krupskaia, and others categorically opposed their execution—and their voices prevailed.[93] The ex-Menshevik, D. B. Riazanov, immediately conveyed the good news to Abramovich in prison. During the Red Terror, Riazanov frequently interceded on the Socialists' behalf and protested at Party meetings against Cheka executions.[94]

In December 1918, all the Socialists were released from Butyrki, but a further wave of arrests and executions hit the Right SRs and Mensheviks in March 1919.[95] In his message of 1 April 1919 to the Vecheka, Lenin accused these parties of fomenting strikes with a view to overthrowing Soviet rule.[96]

Except for the period of armed opposition from May 1918 to June 1919, by and large the Right SRs refrained from fighting the Bolsheviks, for fear of facilitating the rise to power of a reactionary dictatorship; at no point did they collaborate with the Whites. After mid-1919, they took the view that the overthrow of the Bolshevik régime must be brought about through the united will of the people, by mass peasant protest rather than by insurrection.[97] Nevertheless, in the acute military crisis of the summer of 1919, Bolshevik distrust continued to focus—perhaps not unreasonably—on the Right SRs, these being bracketed with Kadets and Mensheviks as targets for arrest and even execution. In a vituperative letter to workers and peasants, printed in *Pravda* on 28 August 1919, Lenin whipped up popular hatred against the SRs and Mensheviks, 'the accomplices of the Whites, of the landlords and capitalists'.[98] Extensive arrests were carried out on 28 December 1919 among Right SRs who, so *Izvestia* alleged, were associated with 'detachments of deserters and bandits in Tambov Province, destroying railroads in the rear of the Red Army'.[99] Periods of detention grew longer: in 1918 the norm for SRs was 3–4 months, in 1919 it extended to 8–9 months, and as from 1920 detentions began to stretch out indefinitely.[100]

With the ending of the Civil War, the Vecheka was able to concentrate more resources on penetrating and controlling such political opposition organisations—whether overt or covert—as had survived. Cheka saturation methods against the secessionist *Narod* group, previously a wing of the Right SR Party, are chronicled in detail in Nikolai Bezpalov's book, *Confessions of a GPU Agent*, published in Prague in 1925. Arrested in Uralsk around April 1921 for distributing *Narod* literature, Bezpalov was forced to become a Cheka informer under threat of execution of his wife and mother on invented charges of their contact with Tolstoyan Cossacks and of spying for the Whites. His recruiter, Zubkov, chief of the Uralsk

Provincial Cheka's section specialising in coverage of the SRs, casuistically assured Bezpalov that the role of a mere informer differed fundamentally from that of an *agent provocateur* who incited his victims to commit a crime and then denounced them. To encourage Bezpalov, Zubkov confided that he himself had been secretary of the SR Party Committee in Uralsk after the October Revolution and, having been arrested by the Bolsheviks, had been sent to the Butyrki gaol in Moscow, where he was recruited and used by the Cheka as an informer in SR circles. Exposed, he had been promoted to the status of M-Cheka investigator.[101] Bezpalov, having likewise been transferred to a Moscow prison, was taken in hand by Kozhevnikov, chief of the Third Section of the Vecheka's Secret Department, then headed by Samsonov; Kozhevnikov instructed him to penetrate the *Narod* Party, of whose Central Bureau and Presidium Bezpalov eventually became secretary. The *Narod* Party was already swarming with Cheka agents: characteristically, at least five out of eight delegates attending a *Narod* Party conference in 1921 were working for the Cheka.[102] Without such hidden support, the *Narod* organisation would soon have disintegrated; no doubt this pattern also applied to other political opposition groups, penetrated and manipulated by the Cheka.

On 28 December 1921, the Communist Party's Central Committee considered Dzerzhinsky's report on the state of the SRs and Mensheviks, and decided in principle to put the SR Central Committee on trial; Dzerzhinsky was appointed to a commission which was to determine the right moment for public announcement of the measure.[103] During June–July 1922 there took place in Moscow the public trial (first of the Soviet political 'show trials') of thirty-four leading Right SRs accused of plotting the overthrow of the Soviet Government and, in particular, of organising the assassinations of Volodarskii and Uritskii, as well as the attempt on Lenin's life. These charges, supported by Right SR renegades who had turned state's evidence, were categorically denied by the Right SR leadership. Nevertheless, suspended death sentences were passed on twelve of the defendants, and prison sentences with forced labour on a number of others;[104] all those sentenced disappeared for ever into the obscurity of Soviet prisons and labour camps. The activity of the Right SR Party was effectively extinguished.

THE MENSHEVIKS

Unlike the Right SRs, the Mensheviks consistently pursued a policy of peaceable opposition to the Bolshevik régime, a policy conducted

by strictly legitimate means, advocating the observance of civil rights under the rule of law. And so we find Martov pressing, already on 30 October 1917, at the *Vikzhel* Committee's third meeting, for the adoption of his resolution 'On the general inadmissibility of the application of political terror, including extraordinary courts'. Three days later, on 2 November, the Menshevik Party's Central Committee called for the release of political prisoners, for an end to the system of political terror, for restoration of freedom of the press, speech, assembly, association, and strikes, and for the inviolability of person and home.[105]

The Menshevik Party's popularity stood at its nadir during the last months of 1917. Only 16 Mensheviks, out of a total of some 700 deputies, were elected to the Constituent Assembly. However, by mid-1918 the party was again attracting sizeable support among the industrial proletariat, as Bolshevik labour policies grew harsher. Two constant planks in the Menshevik platform were recall of the Constituent Assembly and free elections to the Soviets.

Under a Sovnarkom instruction of 23 May 1918, the Vecheka undertook surveillance of the Menshevik and SR leadership.[106] On 23 July, Chekists arrested some forty delegates (mainly Mensheviks, including Abramovich) attending a factory workers' conference in Moscow,[107] the most prominent of whom were detained until November/December, and narrowly escaped execution in the reprisals for the attempt on Lenin's life.[108] Meanwhile, in mid-June 1918, the Mensheviks—whom Lenin unscrupulously denounced (pairing them with the Right SRs) as counter-revolutionary instigators of insurrection—had been expelled from VTsIK and from the Soviets, and their press closed down. On 30 November, the expulsion decree was revoked in regard of the Mensheviks;[109] it was never reimposed, but in practice the Mensheviks led a semi-legal existence, under Cheka harassment. In a message of 1 April 1919, Lenin drew the Vecheka's attention to the Right SRs and Mensheviks as instigators of strikes,[110] and two days later he bade Dzerzhinsky hasten his departure for Tula, in order to suppress strikes in armament factories allegedly provoked by Menshevik propaganda.[111] In early summer 1919, the Central Committee of the Communist Party ordered the arrest of all prominent Mensheviks who were not positively known to support the Soviet cause.[112] And in its exhortation of 9 July, addressed to all Party members under the slogan 'All out against Denikin', the Central Committee frankly incited to indiscriminate terror, encouraging comrades 'to seek out and imprison and sometimes even to shoot hundreds of traitors among the Kadets, the politically

neutral, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, who act (some with arms, some conspiring, others agitating against mobilisation, like the printers and the railwaymen among the Mensheviks) *against* the Soviet Government, i.e. *for Denikin*'.[113]

The Menshevik Party's programme, drawn up that summer, besides seeking constitutional reform and extensive civil rights (though not for non-working men) demanded abolition of the death penalty, and of all organs of investigation and of administrative punishment such as the Cheka.[114] Martov pressed these points in his speech at the Seventh Congress of Soviets, in December 1919, protesting against 'the monstrous growth of terror'. In reply, Lenin accused Martov of desiring a return to bourgeois democracy, and asserted: 'No, both terror and the Chekas are absolutely indispensable.'[115] And he declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat did not signify an even-handed dispensation of civil rights:

> We do not promise anything, we do not promise equality between workers and peasants. We do not promise at all that the constitution will safeguard freedom and equality. Freedom—but for which class and for what purpose? Equality—but whose equality with whom? ... After two years, we can state, and shall certainly be believed, that we are capable of holding out for several years precisely because we wrote into the constitution the withdrawal of rights from individuals and groups. Nor do we conceal who it is whom we deprive of rights. We declare openly that it is the group of Mensheviks and SRs.[116]

At this time Mensheviks, SRs, and Anarchists comprised merely 1.2 per cent of members of provincial, city, and district Soviet executive committees,[117] from which they had been systematically squeezed out by the Bolsheviks. Meanwhile, in the Bolsheviks' hour of trial, during the autumn of 1919, the Mensheviks loyally carried out a recruiting campaign for the Red Army,[118] but their repression continued unabated. Characteristically, a Vecheka circular of 17 June 1920 equated Mensheviks, SRs of all denominations, and Anarchists with monarchists and foreign spies.[119] The years 1921–2 saw a sustained Bolshevik purge of oppositional elements. On 25 February 1921, the Cheka arrested 160 Mensheviks in their Moscow club and the next day many Mensheviks were detained in Petrograd, among them Dan. Further arrests of Mensheviks were simultaneously carried out in provincial cities.[120] During the first three months of 1921, altogether some 2,000 Mensheviks, including the whole central committee, were taken into what proved to be long-term detention.[121] Although Menshevik agitation contributed to the industrial strikes which preceded the Kronstadt Rising, the Mensheviks had no hand in that event, and indeed were under lock and key before the Rising

started on 1 March 1921. Nevertheless, but for Moscow's veto, Zinoviev would have had Dan and other Mensheviks executed in Petrograd's Peter and Paul Fortress, as hostages in reprisal for Kronstadt.[122]

Lenin's hard line on the Mensheviks showed in his note of 17 April 1921 to the Politburo, criticising a Vecheka report, written by the Chekist, I. Bardin (Mgeladze); the report recommended that certain groups within the Menshevik, SR, and Anarchist parties should be legalised, and that individual Mensheviks and SRs should be released to take part in elections to the Moscow Soviet. These proposals were turned down at a Politburo meeting on 14 April.[123] Lenin's declared view at this time was that 'the place for the Mensheviks and the SRs ... is in prison.'[124] Similarly, Latsis, in his treatise on the Chekas published in 1921, proposed that the method of isolation in concentration camps should be applied to anti-Soviet parties, and especially to almost all Left and Right SRs, and partly to active Mensheviks and Anarchists.[125] In April, the politicals in Moscow's Butyrki gaol, which stood under virtual Cheka control, joined a mass hunger strike by non-political prisoners in protest against unhygienic prison conditions. The strike proved successful, but several days later, on 25 April, the politicals—110 in all (34 Mensheviks, 32 SRs, 18 LSRs, 16 Anarchists, and 10 non-party)—were beaten up by Chekists and soldiers and were transferred by brute force to provincial prisons.[126] In early January 1922, a hunger strike by Mensheviks in Butyrki, protesting against an administrative decision to exile twenty of their number to Turkestan, forced the Vecheka's hand and enabled a dozen leading Mensheviks, among them Dan and Nicolaevsky, to go into exile abroad.[127]

That Dzerzhinsky was not indifferent to the fate of socialists imprisoned by his organisation emerges from his instruction of 30 December 1920 (to which Yagoda was co-signatory in his capacity as Vecheka director of administration) regarding confinement of political prisoners, stating:

> Information reaching the Vecheka indicates that members of various anti-Soviet parties arrested for political activities are frequently confined in very bad conditions; prison staff treat them incorrectly and often even roughly. The Vecheka points out that these categories of persons should be regarded not as people undergoing punishment but as people temporarily isolated from society in the interests of the Revolution and their conditions of detention should not bear a punitive character.[128]

In theory, a distinction was drawn between political and other prisoners; the former were members of various socialist and anarchist

parties, whilst all other prisoners were classified as either counter-revolutionaries (KRs) or criminals. As the Vecheka emphasised, the detention of political prisoners was preventive, not punitive, but this distinction tended to become blurred, and 'politicals' were increasingly subjected to harsh treatment.

Meanwhile, the persecution of the Mensheviks continued. At its session on 4 June 1921, the Politburo directed the Vecheka to step up its measures against the Mensheviks, who were co-operating in the provinces with the SRs;[129] on 28 December, the Central Committee discussed Dzerzhinsky's report regarding the Mensheviks and SRs, and instructed a commission, which included Dzerzhinsky, to examine his proposals for dealing with the Menshevik problem, and report their conclusions to the Politburo.[130] On 21 January 1922, Lenin wrote: 'Comrade Trotsky! I am in no doubt that the Mensheviks are intensifying, and will continue to intensify, their most malicious agitation. I therefore consider that it is essential to increase supervision and repression against them. I have spoken about this to Unshlikht and I ask you to find ten minutes for discussion with him.'[131] Ten days later Lenin wrote to Unshlikht urging acceleration of procedures in the courts, and in Sovnarkom or VTsIK, for repression of the Mensheviks.[132] In his notes for the Eleventh Party Congress, in March–April 1922, Lenin jotted: 'Mensheviks and SRs to be shot if they show their noses.'[133] At the Congress itself Lenin declared: 'For the public exhibition of Menshevism our revolutionary courts must shoot.'[134]

The Mensheviks were likewise repressed in the Ukraine. In August 1920, the Ukrainian Cheka subjected an All-Ukrainian Menshevik conference to searches and arrests, confining some delegates in concentration camps with forced labour. Menshevik organisations were suppressed in Kiev, Odessa, and other cities.[135] Mass arrests of entire Menshevik Party organisations in seven Ukrainian provinces followed the outbreak of the Kronstadt mutiny, resulting in the effective close-down of Menshevik activity in the Ukraine.[136]

The Mensheviks, whom Lenin abusively called social-patriots, petty bourgeois counter-revolutionaries, and accomplices of the White-Guardists, and whom the Chekas were at liberty to shoot in times of crisis, were punctilious as a party in not going beyond the bounds of legal opposition to the Bolsheviks, even when they themselves were outlawed; on no account would they prejudice the cause of the Russian Revolution. Individual Mensheviks who joined organisations aiming at the overthrow of the Soviet Government were expelled from the Menshevik Party.

Although Menshevik support among the industrial proletariat had ebbed during 1917—early 1918 in favour of the Bolshevik Party, the Mensheviks thereafter increasingly recovered their strength, especially in the trade unions, their traditional stronghold. Lenin's abandonment of workers' control for a policy of stern labour regimentation under War Communism, together with the deprivations of the Civil War, inevitably led to disillusionment among the labouring masses, their discontent periodically finding expression in industrial strikes. Under the Bolshevik régime strikes were forbidden, and were invariably blamed on socialist opposition parties.[137]

THE TRADE UNIONS

Significantly, it was a trade union—the railwaymen's union, *Vikzhel*, whose threatened strike all but unseated Lenin and Trotsky within a week of the October *coup*, and it was to deal with a crippling strike of government employees that the Vecheka was specifically created. Cheka intervention was frequently practised to curb labour indiscipline. *Izvestia* of 2 July 1918 printed Dzerzhinsky's denunciation of the SRs and Mensheviks as being responsible for industrial unrest in Petrograd; Dzerzhinsky called on the Chekas to suppress strike action.[138]

Trade unions, whose membership grew from 1½ million in July 1917 to 2¼ million by the end of that year,[139] had expanded by 1920 to a strength of some 6 million workers, among whose rank and file Menshevik influences predominated at the expense of the increasingly unpopular Bolsheviks.[140] The latter's sensitivity in this domain is reflected in the Vecheka Circular Letter of 1 June 1920, instructing local Chekas to pay particular attention to disruptive Menshevik activity in the trade unions and co-operatives, and especially in the printers' union. The circular urged: 'Incriminating material should be carefully collected, and they should be proceeded against not as Mensheviks but as speculators and inciters to strike action, etc.'[141]

Members of the visiting British Labour delegation attended a public meeting of the Menshevik-minded printers' union in Moscow on 23 May 1920, and heard a speaker describe the grievous political restrictions imposed on the union, and indeed on the workers generally, by 'a dictatorship of the minority ... who drive men in this paradise by means of a stick'.[142] One month later, on 18 June, the printers' union was suppressed by the Cheka; in September its leaders were sentenced to confinement in a concentration camp.[143] The only other surviving Menshevik-led trade union, that of the chemists, was suppressed shortly afterwards.[144]

Lenin was determined to exercise firm control over the trade unions, whose role was crucial to the mobilisation of labour and to the maintenance of high industrial production. If the trade unions could not be dominated externally, then they must be infiltrated and manipulated from inside. So we have Lenin writing, in 1920, that Communists should be prepared to 'make every imaginable sacrifice, and even, if necessary, resort to all sorts of schemes and stratagems, employ illegal methods and evasions, conceal the truth, in order to penetrate the trade unions, stay there, and at all costs conduct revolutionary work within.'[145]

We also find Dzerzhinsky, at the height of the Party controversy about the role of the trade unions, encouraging his Chekists to participate in trade union activities—a kind of Communist flirtation with Okhrana Zubatovist tactics.[146] On 18 March 1921, Dzerzhinsky wrote a note to Messing, head of the M-Cheka, proposing that for the purpose of drawing workers into co-operation with the Cheka, special groups should be attached to the directing boards of trade unions, such groups consisting of one representative from the Cheka and two from the trade union; the task of these groups would be to combat abuses observable in the trade unions.[147] A similar exercise was put into effect in July 1921, when representatives of industrial workers in the provinces were elected to membership of workers' groups attached to local Chekas.[148]

Meanwhile a prolonged Party controversy on the role of trade unions followed Trotsky's *dirigiste* relegation of the railwaymen's trade union, after he had taken charge, in early 1920 (whilst continuing as People's Commissar for War), of the People's Commissariat of Communications, in order to rescue the railway system from the organisational breakdown which was threatening it. The issue was debated at the Tenth Party Congress (8–16 March 1921), when Trotsky's policy (which had Bukharin's and Dzerzhinsky's backing) advocating fusion of the trade unions with the state, and stressing the need for high productivity and for the compulsory mobilisation of labour, was defeated by Lenin's policy platform, affirming the principle of trade union autonomy, but postulating the complete subordination of the trade unions to the Party.

THE KRONSTADT RISING

By early 1921, the country was economically on its knees, exhausted, and unable or unwilling to endure further privation. The industrial proletariat, notably in Petrograd, was resorting to strikes, the peasantry was rebelling, and the Party itself was divided on issues of

labour policy. In the single month of February 1921, on the eve of Kronstadt, the Cheka reported 118 separate risings throughout Russia.[149]

The Kronstadt Rising expressed a deeply felt popular revulsion against the continuing Bolshevik policies of siege economy and political repression. Particularly significant was the location of the rebellion in Kronstadt, the island fortress and Baltic Fleet base commanding the sea approaches to Petrograd. Kronstadt's population consisted of sailors and soldiers, besides civilian workers in the naval establishments. Kronstadt sailors carried a tradition of violent radicalism and loyalty to the Revolution: in the July disturbances of 1917, Trotsky had called them 'the beauty and pride' of the Revolution. It had been a Kronstadt sailor, the Anarchist Anatolii Zhelezniakov, who brusquely closed the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. This Anarchist streak gives the clue: the Kronstadt sailors' radicalism was not constricted by the strait-jacket of party discipline. The vast majority of the sailors and soldiers of Kronstadt were workers and peasants in uniform, some of them recently recruited in the Ukraine, and imbued with hatred for the harsh Communist policies of food requisitioning and labour regimentation.[150]

The Kronstadt insurrection, which erupted on 1 March 1921, was immediately preceded—and ignited—by a wave of strikes among the industrial workers of Petrograd. The city population was famished, sullen, and exhausted by four years of deprivation. In late February the Mensheviks managed to print and distribute a proclamation and news-sheet among the restive but unorganised workers, whose resentful mood spread to the Seventh Red Army based on Petrograd. The Petrograd Cheka responded by carrying out widespread arrests, detaining some 500 workers and trade union officials,[151] and hauling in such prominent Mensheviks and SRs in Petrograd as were still at liberty;[152] students, intellectuals, and other non-workers caught in the dragnet were probably numbered in thousands.[153] During the actual Kronstadt Rising, the Petrograd Cheka arrested some 600 more people in the city.[154]

The programme of the Kronstadt insurgents, stated in a resolution of 1 March, included demands for re-election of Soviets by secret ballot, freedom of speech and press for workers, peasants, Anarchists, and socialists of the left (but not, be it noted, for the bourgeoisie), freedom of assembly for trade unions and peasant organisations, release of all political socialist prisoners and of all workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors imprisoned because of their connection with

working class and peasant movements, review of cases of all persons imprisoned in gaols and concentration camps, and abolition of food confiscation cordon detachments.[155]

The Chekas attracted much abuse. The Kronstadt insurgents' newspaper, *Izvestia of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Sailors, Red Army men and Workers of Kronstadt* of 8 March 1921, printed an article entitled 'What we are fighting for', which opened:

> Having carried out the October Revolution, the working class hoped to achieve its own emancipation. What resulted was an even greater enslavement of the human personality. The power of the police-gendarme monarchy passed into the hands of the Communist usurpers who, instead of bringing freedom to the workers, instilled in them the constant fear of falling into the torture chambers of the Cheka, which in their horrors far exceeded the police rule of the Tsarist régime. Bayonets, bullets, and the harsh commands of the Cheka *Oprichniki*,[156] that is what the working man of Soviet Russia has attained after so much struggle and suffering.

The article concluded on the following note: 'The workers and peasants march irresistibly forward, leaving behind them the Constituent Assembly, with its bourgeois régime, and the dictatorship of the Communist party, with its Cheka and its state capitalism, whose hangman's noose encircles the necks of the labouring classes and threatens to strangle them to death. ...'[157]

The Kronstadt sailors' repudiation of the Constituent Assembly showed how little they owed to Menshevik and SR influences; they no more wanted the reinstatement of a liberal-democratic type of government than the continuation of Communist tyranny. They stood for 'honestly elected Soviets' and political and economic freedom for workers and peasants. An assortment of disparate radicals, they possessed no systematic ideology or concerted plan of action.[158] Petrichenko, chairman of Kronstadt's Provisional Revolutionary Committee, later stated emphatically that the revolt was spontaneous and altogether independent of external political influences, whether foreign, émigré, or native Russian; its object was simply to eliminate Bolshevik oppression.[159]

The Cheka was again reviled as a tool of tyranny in revolutionary Kronstadt's newspaper of 16 March, on the eve of the final battle:

> Having disorganised production under 'workers' control', the Bolsheviks proceeded to nationalise the factories and shops. From being a slave of the capitalist, the worker was transformed into a slave of state enterprise. ... With great energy the Communists set about ruining the peasants, busying themselves with the creation of Soviet farms—the estates of the new landlord, the state. That is what the peasants have received from Bolshevik socialism, instead of freedom to till the liberated land. In exchange for almost totally

requisitioned grain, and confiscated cows and horses, they got Cheka raids and firing squads. A fine system of barter in a workers' state—lead and bayonets for bread.[160]

On 5 March, the young Tukhachevskii assumed command of the unreliable 7th Red Army and of all other troops in the Petrograd Military District, reinforced by military cadets, by Red Army contingents of proven reliability, and by Cheka troops.[161] Further reinforcements, prior to the first abortive Red Army attack on 8 March, included additional Cheka detachments;[162] this attack was led by cadets, followed by picked Red Army units, with Cheka machine gunners bringing up the rear to discourage any would-be deserters.[163] Cadets, picked Communist troops, and special Cheka detachments likewise constituted a very high proportion of the assault force in the next, equally ill-fated, attack.[164] In addition, loyal regiments were summoned from the Ukraine and from the Polish front, augmented by Chinese, Tartar, Bashkir, and Lettish troops, who might have fewer qualms than would their Great-Russian brothers about firing upon the insurgents.[165] After several unsuccessful assaults on Kronstadt, Tukhachevskii's forces, camouflaged in white robes, stormed the island fortress over the ice at dawn on 17 March, and after fanatical fighting involving heavy losses on both sides, finally subdued Kronstadt around midnight.

The desperate resistance of 15,000 or so defenders had been overcome by about 50,000 attackers, twice the number used in the first assault.[166] Prominent in the fighting were 300 delegates from the Tenth Party Congress,[167] led by Kliment Voroshilov;[168] some 15 delegates lost their lives.[169] A reasonable estimate put the total Communist losses in dead, wounded, and missing at 10,000; the rebels' losses were probably in the region of 600 killed, over 1,000 wounded, and about 2,500 taken prisoner.[170] Some 8,000 rebels fled over the ice to Finland.[171]

The absence of firm relevant evidence makes it impossible to estimate the numbers, or to identify the units, of the Cheka troops involved. Given the considerable numbers of mobile and self-contained Cheka battalions then existing, it would have been surprising if large-scale Cheka reinforcements had not been rushed to the Kronstadt front; Cheka forces were created in the first place precisely to deal with insurrection. It must be remembered, however, that Cheka troops were at that moment already heavily committed in suppressing the Tambov rebellion and many of the numerous other peasant revolts rife throughout the country.[172]

If the exact scale and effect of the Cheka contribution to the

capture of Kronstadt remain undetermined, no such doubt attends the role of the Cheka in the aftermath of the mutiny. Of the 2,000–2,500 Kronstadt prisoners, 13, seemingly selected because of their social background (5 ex-naval officers of noble birth, 1 former priest, and 7 peasants), were tried *in camera* on 20 March and sentenced to death with suitable publicity as ringleaders of the mutiny. There was no public trial for the Kronstadt rebels.[173] Several hundred prisoners (up to 600, according to Dan)[174] were shot at once in Kronstadt. The rest were transferred to Cheka gaols in Petrograd, crammed to overflowing. Over the next few months, hundreds of the captured insurgents were taken from prison in small batches and shot[175]—Dan reported one such execution of 40 men.[176] The survivors, together with many of the 8,000 rebels who had escaped to Finland and had since been voluntarily repatriated, were sent to perish in forced labour camps in the frozen north, by the White Sea.[177] Anarchist sources reported that, as at early 1922, out of 5,000 Kronstadt prisoners depatched to the Northern Camps of Special Purpose at Archangel and Kholmogory, only 1,500 had survived.[178] Another report, related by an escaped prisoner (not himself a Kronstadt rebel), had it that around 2,000 Kronstadt rebels perished in a mass execution close to Kholmogory camp.[179]

Attention has been drawn by Wolin and Slusser[180] to Ksenofontov's role during the Kronstadt Rising: according to his obituary in 1926, Ksenofontov attended the Tenth Party Congress (8–16 March) as a delegate; during the mutiny he was sent to Kronstadt armed with 'important assignments and wide powers'.[181] Assuming that, as reported by Sofinov, Ksenofontov did not leave Vecheka service until 15 April 1921,[182] he would have been the most senior Chekist on the Kronstadt scene, and would have directed and co-ordinated Cheka action on the spot. The ensuing investigation of the mutiny was supervised by the Chekist Agranov.[183] During the mutiny itself the Vecheka's Secret Department, under T. P. Samsonov, was involved in counter-measures;[184] for instance, it operated an agent within the Petrograd Revolutionary Committee, which organised aid given by the workers of Petrograd to the Kronstadt insurgents.[185]

Whilst publicly ascribing the Kronstadt sailors' disaffection to the 'counter-revolutionary' influences of Mensheviks, Left and Right SRs, and Anarchists,[186] as well as to incitement by White Guard officers (the presence in Kronstadt of General Kozlovskii, a military specialist, was made much of in Communist propaganda),[187] the Soviet Government had no illusions about the truth of the matter. Lenin himself conceded that the rebels of Kronstadt 'do not want the

White Guards, and they do not want our power either'.[188] Lenin also went on record as saying: 'In 1921, after we had victoriously come through the most important stage in the Civil War, we came up against a big—the biggest, I think—internal political crisis. That internal crisis revealed the discontent not only of a considerable part of the peasantry, but also of the workers. This was the first and, I hope, the last time in the history of Soviet Russia that, not consciously but instinctively, as a matter of mood, large masses of the peasantry were against us.'[189]

That such bitter disenchantment of the common people with the Bolshevik régime had in fact been evident earlier, was admitted in Vecheka Circular Letter of 17 June 1920, warning that 'the exhausted and scarcely politically conscious worker and peasant, having failed to attain a quick improvement in their material circumstances, are beginning to show their discontent, even expressing it through strikes and rebellions'.[190] Peasant insurrection had of course been endemic in Soviet Russia ever since the introduction of forcible food requisitioning in mid-1918; most of the 344 risings recorded by Latsis as having occurred by mid-1919, in only twenty provinces of RSFSR territory,[191] were almost certainly peasant rebellions. Such rebellions were so widespread in March 1919 that the Party Central Committee instructed provincial Soviets to restore to local Chekas all their best personnel who had recently been withdrawn from Cheka service[192] as a result of the abolition of the District Chekas. The persistence of peasant discontent is illustrated by the 118 risings reported by the Vecheka in February 1921, already referred to; it was also implicit in Dzerzhinsky's order of 8 January 1921, 'On the penal policy of Cheka organs', which opened: 'There are no more external fronts. The danger of a bourgeois *coup* has vanished. The harsh period of Civil War is over, but it has left a difficult legacy—the prisons are packed, chiefly with workers and peasants instead of the bourgeoisie.'

In his order, Dzerzhinsky directed that the prisons should be emptied of workers and peasants, especially those held for minor theft and profiteering; a systematic review of the prison population should be carried out, and separate concentration camps should be built for the bourgeoisie, who should meanwhile be isolated in prison from detained workers and peasants.[193]

The Kronstadt Rising marked the end of an era. It underlined the bankruptcy of War Communism (which had, however, fulfilled its immediate purpose in assisting victory in the Civil War), and it hastened Lenin's announcement, made abruptly at the Tenth Party Congress, of the introduction of the New Economic Policy. With the

restoration of private trading and the abolition of the food requisitioning system, for which a tax in kind was substituted, peace returned gradually to the villages. Nevertheless, the year 1921 still simmered with peasant unrest, and saw the Vecheka's involvement in the suppression of several major insurrections, prominent among them being the Tambov rebellion in central Russia.

THE TAMBOV REBELLION

The revolt in Tambov Province, more than 90 per cent of whose 3.5 million inhabitants were peasants, began on 19 August 1920, when starving peasants of Kirsanov District rebelled against the oppressive extortion of grain.[194] In a covering note of 16 July 1921 to Lenin, enclosing a detailed report by V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko on the whole Tambov episode, Tukhachevskii frankly stated: 'The causes of the uprising are the same as throughout the entire RSFSR, i.e. dissatisfaction with the policy of food requisitioning and the clumsy and exceptionally harsh enforcement of it ... on the spot.' The revolt intensified and spread to the adjoining provinces of Saratov and Penza. To quote Tukhachevskii on the opening phase: 'In five districts of Tambov Province the Soviet régime no longer existed. ... There was a total of up to 21,000 bandits. ... The action to be undertaken had to be regarded not as some sort of more or less protracted operation but as an entire campaign or even war.'[195]

Itself the spontaneous expression of peasant anger and despair, the Tambov insurrection assumed the proportions of an organised military movement, under the command of an inspired guerrilla leader, Aleksandr Stepanovich Antonov. Of *petit bourgeois* stock, and an SR since 1906, Antonov was sentenced around 1908 to penal servitude in Siberia; liberated by the February Revolution, he joined the LSR Party and headed the local militia in his native Kirsanov District, but in August 1918 he broke with the Bolshevik régime and became an outlaw.[196] Operating at the head of 100 men, he slew in cold blood 200 Soviet political workers.[197] Henceforward he no longer owed allegiance to any political party.

When the peasant revolt flared up in August 1920, Antonov created two armies, recruited mainly from Red Army deserters and militant peasants; according to Antonov-Ovseenko's report, in February 1921 Antonov's combat forces amounted to as many as 40,000 men, plus some 10,000 men in internal guard units. Considered as troops his men were of poor quality, but Antonov could count on the organised support of the peasant population, which 'made his bands less vulnerable, exceptionally mobile and, so to speak,

ubiquitous'. He had an excellent intelligence service which penetrated even the Tambov Cheka, and which reported rapidly on Soviet troop movements, whereas, according to Antonov-Ovseenko, the Cheka and the local Special Department (OO) 'simply did not exist', their intelligence being 'abominably run' and their communications poor.[198]

The Tambov revolt occurred at a difficult time for the Communist régime, coinciding as it did with the successful Polish counter-offensive launched in mid-August from Warsaw, with Wrangel's break-out in the Don Territory, and with subsequent operations against Makhno guerrillas in the Ukraine. Consequently, regular troops could not be spared for Tambov, where operations were initially left mainly to CHON and VOKhR/VNUS units.[199] On 31 August, VOKhR ordered the immediate despatch to Tambov of two half-squadrons of cavalry belonging to the Riazan and Tula Provincial Chekas.[200] By mid-September, Soviet forces in Tambov Province numbered 3,500 men, including further Cheka reinforcements.[201] In December, a VOKhR infantry regiment and a cavalry regiment arrived from Kazan, and from Moscow came a Vecheka regiment of special purpose.[202] This still inadequate support resulted from Lenin's personal intervention: on 19 October he had written, as Chairman of Defence Council, to Kornev (successively commander of VOKhR and VNUS), insisting on the swiftest possible liquidation of the escalating Tambov rebellion, and calling for the application of more troops and more energy. Shortly afterwards Lenin reproached Dzerzhinsky concerning a rebel success; he ordered Kornev to be reprimanded and the Tambov Provincial Chekists responsible for the reverse to be court-martialled and replaced by 'super-energetic' staff.[203]

From August 1920 until April 1921, Soviet rule was no longer effective in Tambov Province and in parts of the provinces of Penza and Saratov, these areas being under Antonov's control. In late February 1921, VTsIK established a Plenipotentiary Commission for the Suppression of Banditry in Tambov Province, with Antonov-Ovseenko as its Chairman. Further Cheka reinforcements arrived in Tambov, including a Detachment of Special Purpose raised by Dzerzhinsky in mid-February. The Tambov Provincial Cheka and the local Cheka Special Department (OO) were purged and strengthened, and were allotted, *inter alia*, the task of producing an order of battle and identification list of the peasant partisans. By the end of April they had compiled more than 1,000 names of active partisans and of suspect local Soviet personnel, besides organising networks of informants in the villages and intercepting partisan communications.[204] In the ensuing months the Cheka succeeded in gaining

control of all channels through which equipment and intelligence reached the partisans.[205] Meanwhile, however, at the end of April, the chief of staff of the Red Army closed a report to the *Revvoensovet* as follows: 'In conclusion it is necessary to note the slowness of our intelligence organisation ... whereas Antonov collects the information he needs relatively easily and therefore usually evades our thrusts in good time.'[206]

On 29 December, the Red Army assumed command of military operations—which had hitherto been conducted by VNUS—in the Tambov region, but even after that date reinforcements initially continued to consist of VNUS troops.[207] As at 1 March 1921, Soviet military strength in Tambov Province stood at 32,500 infantry and 8,000 cavalry, besides artillery and machine guns.[208] The Red Army moved into the Tambov theatre in strength in April/May; Tukhachevskii, the victor of Kronstadt, took command on 27 April, arriving personally on the Tambov scene on 6 May.[209] A concerted campaign was mounted against Antonov, whose forces—which in early May still mustered 21,000 men—were systematically destroyed and reduced by mid-July to barely 1,200 effective partisans.[210] This spelt the end of the Tambov Rebellion, also known as *antonovshchina* and referred to disparagingly by the Bolsheviks as 'the Bandit Movement in Tambov'. Antonov himself escaped, surviving until 24 June 1922, when he and his brother were killed by a Tambov GPU detachment.[211]

The Antonov revolt had no clearly defined political programme, and indeed its political content was negligible, even though the Bolsheviks insistently blamed the Socialist Revolutionary Party for it. Thus a Chekist, E. F. Muravev,[212] who penetrated deeply into Antonov's organisation, misleadingly characterised it as follows: 'The Antonovshchina was a political movement, a sort of mid-Russian Vendée—peasant in its social composition, and *kulak*-SR in it content, skilfully organised and directed by the SRs.'[213] Muravev's assessment of the SR role was invented. Antonov himself, though originally an SR, had become an LSR in 1918,[214] and was regarded with distrust by the SR Party.[215] Initially the SRs had a strong party organisation in Tambov Province, and they undoubtedly exerted a significant influence through the local Unions of Working Peasants,[216] but the latter were basically peasant emanations and were in fact more militant than the SR Party leadership; the SR Central Committee forbade its branches and individual members to take part in the Tambov Rebellion.[217] Moreover, contact between SR Party headquarters and Tambov Province was severed after the Cheka had

arrested, in August 1920, a good many members of the SR Party's Tambov Provincial Committee.[218]

That timely exercise apart, the Tambov Provincial Cheka clearly fell down on its task during the first six months of the insurrection, admittedly operating against heavy odds. However, once it had been reorganised and reinforced, the Tambov Cheka amply redeemed itself. The (possibly exaggerated) extent of its contribution has only recently been revealed, with the publication of Muravev's, Samsonov's, and Kotovskii's accounts of the Cheka's extremely skilful penetration of Antonov's organisation, culminating in the arrest in Moscow of a secret delegation of Antonov's duped staff officers, and in the rout by Kotovskii's cavalry brigade of the remnants of Antonov's forces, tricked through the co-operation of Antonov's former chief of staff, Ektov, who had been trapped and recruited by the Cheka.[219] The Special Department (OO) of Kotovskii's brigade distinguished itself in battle and in cunning deception ploys, two of its members being awarded Orders of the Red Banner.[220] Another Cheka unit which won itself glory was the 'Sverdlov' armoured car detachment, which began military operations against Antonov on 9 May; in July it was redeployed to help suppress guerrilla activity in Siberia.[221] Also to the fore in Tambov were men of the Vecheka Second Rifle Regiment and a Vecheka detachment of special purpose.[222]

Soviet retaliation in insurgent areas assumed extreme forms right from the start of the Tambov rebellion: five villages were burned to the ground as early as 5 September 1920, whilst two days later over 250 peasants were shot.[223] Reprisals continued to be taken against families of insurgent peasants; as at 20 July 1921, 5,000 hostages were held in concentration camps, awaiting transportation to exile.[224]

MAKHNO

Comparable in character to Antonov's insurrection in Tambov was Makhno's peasant movement in the Ukraine, which lasted from 1918 to 1921. Like Antonov, Makhno fought for peasant freedom against repressive central authority, be it German, Ukrainian, or Russian. Unlike the Ukrainian atamans, he was no nationalist; his creed was anarchism, and it permeated his movement. Nestor Makhno was born in 1889 into a poor peasant family in Guliai Pole in the central Ukraine. An Anarchist-Communist from the age of seventeen, he was gaoled in 1908 and later sentenced to hang for involvement in the killing of a policeman, but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment; the February Revolution freed him from Moscow's Butyrki gaol, where he had absorbed anarchist theory from a fellow

prisoner, P. A. Arshinov. Back in Guliai Pole, Makhno founded a libertarian Association of Peasants, and in 1918 he raised a partisan detachment to fight Hetman Skoropadskii and the German forces of occupation.

Throughout 1919–20, Makhno's irregulars, flying the black flag of anarchy, fought now against the Whites, now against the Red Army, depending upon which had the upper hand. In the summer of 1919, when the Red Army retreated in the face of Denikin's advance, Makhno cut the White Army's supply lines; by October/November, Makhno's Insurgent Revolutionary Army had swelled to a peak of around 40,000 men.[225] But as the Reds counter-attacked and drove the Whites out of the Ukraine, so did their need of Makhno diminish. In mid-January 1920, the Communist Party of the Ukraine outlawed the Makhno movement, and the Red Army attacked the insurgent forces. There followed eight months of savage fighting. On the occupation of a village by the Red Army, the Cheka would hunt down and hang all active Makhno supporters. Not to be outdone, the Makhnovites killed all the Communist Party adherents they could catch, all Cheka and Militia members, and all officials of the Committees of the Poor and of food requisitioning organisations. Captured Red Army officers were shot, unless their rank and file interceded strongly on their behalf.[226] In October–November 1920, Makhno briefly made common cause with the Red Army against Wrangel, but, following the latter's defeat, the Cheka on 25 November arrested leading Anarchists in Kharkov, and suppressed their paper, *Nabat*. The next day the Red Army attacked Makhno, who was thereafter on the run until eventually, on 28 August 1921, he crossed the River Dnestr into Romanian Bessarabia, seeking sanctuary for himself and 250 survivors. He died, an émigré in Paris, in 1935.[227]

SOVIET METHODS OF COMBATING BANDITRY

Most of the 'political banditry', which assumed such substantial proportions during 1920–2, represented, on the one hand, desperate peasant reaction to extreme economic exploitation by central government (as in Tambov) and, on the other hand, nationalist-secessionist revolts raised by minority peoples, be these Ukrainian, Uzbek, Caucasian, or other ethnic groups. In dealing with both categories of resistance, whose causes were sometimes combined, the political police had a prime part to play. Ruthless measures were applied by the Chekas in suppressing insurrections. Characteristic was the Vecheka announcement issued by K. I. Lander (Vecheka plenipoten-

tiary for the Northern Caucasus) and distributed by Cheka Special Departments (OOs) among the population of the Kuban Region and Black Sea coast at the time of Wrangel's last campaign in September–October 1920. The proclamation warned that any further White or Green insurgent activity would be crushed with merciless severity: in cases where, instead of co-operating with the Soviet authorities, local inhabitants supported the rebels, their settlements would be razed to the ground, their property confiscated, and they themselves would be shot; relatives of insurgents would be treated as hostages: the adults would be executed and minors exiled to central Russia. Lander further threatened: 'In the event of mass insurrection by individual villages, Cossack settlements, and towns, we shall be forced to apply mass terror: for every Soviet worker killed, hundreds of inhabitants of such localities will pay with their lives.'[228]

A special apparatus was developed to counter the 'political banditry' endemic in the Ukraine. On 28 February 1920, the post was created of Commander of the Rear of the South-West Front, to direct the activity of the already functioning commanders of the rear of armies and divisions; at their disposal were detachments of special purpose formed in December 1919 to combat banditry. The first incumbent of the new post (which carried the status of Deputy Commander of the South-West Front) was V. N. Mantsev, chief of the Chekas and OOs of the Ukraine.[229] Operations against banditry were directed by the Staff of VOKhR Troops, under Mantsev's command; on 28 July 1920, VOKhR Troops absorbed the Railway Security Troops and Railway Militia of the Ukraine.[230]

On 17 April 1920, the *Revvoensovet* of the South-West Front created and attached to the Commander of the Rear of that Front a Standing Commission for the co-ordination of action against banditry on the internal front, the Commission (chaired by Mantsev) being composed of representatives of the Ukrainian Communist Party's Central Committee, the Ukrainian NKVD, Cheka and Special Department (OO), the Ukrainian Food Commissariat, the nearest Military District Commissariat, and the Political Department of the Military Front. The Standing Commission's functions involved an exchange of briefing regarding conditions on the internal front, and the adoption of counter-measures designed to assist the Commander of the Rear of the South-West Front to combat banditry and insurrection.[231]

On 25 April 1920, Piłsudski's Polish armies invaded Soviet territory, driving deep into the Ukraine and capturing Kiev on 6 May. By a Russian Party Politburo decision of 26 April, Dzerzhinsky was

despatched to the Ukraine to see to the safety of the Red Army's internal front, which was being ravaged by Ukrainian nationalist-separatist guerrilla groups, by Makhno's anarchic insurgents, and by gangs of marauding 'Greens'. Dzerzhinsky arrived in Kharkov on 5 May;[232] on 29 May he succeeded Mantsev as Commander of the Rear of the South-West Front.[233] Upon arrival in Kharkov, Dzerzhinsky sent for a battalion of Moscow Cheka troops, and by 10 June ten battalions of VOKhR troops had already been moved south from the inner provinces of Russia;[234] in all, 24 VOKhR battalions were transferred, under Dzerzhinsky's direction, from central Russia to the Ukraine and the Kuban.[235] Within a very short space of time Dzerzhinsky had concentrated 50,000 Internal Security Troops in the Ukraine, made up of VOKhR and Railway Security forces, supplemented by cavalry formations and aircraft;[236] in calling for cavalry reinforcements, Dzerzhinsky stressed the need for mobile detachments equipped to pursue and destroy the elusive guerrilla groups which carried out lightning raids and then dispersed, secure in the knowledge that they could rely on the support of the local population.[237] Dzerzhinsky also developed the Standing Commission into the Standing Conference for Combating Banditry,[238] with very much the same composition and with himself as chairman. Upon Dzerzhinsky's recall to Moscow (he left the Ukraine on 13 July,[239] in order to play a political role in the envisaged Soviet occupation of Poland), Mantsev, who had throughout remained chief of the Chekas and OOs of the Ukraine, recovered the post of Commander of the Rear of the South-West Front, in which capacity he chaired the Standing Conference for Combating Banditry. The Conference met initially once a week, and later daily; corresponding Standing Conferences were attached to Commanders of the Rear of the Front at army, provincial sector, and district sector level.[240]

Although by the close of 1920 the Civil War and the Soviet-Polish War were over (large areas of Western Ukraine and Belorussia being ceded to Poland), and the Makhno movement had been dealt a mortal blow, the Ukraine (as indeed also the RSFSR) continued to seethe with discontent, erupting in peasant insurrections. The situation was sufficiently menacing for the Defence Council of the RSFSR to appoint, in early December 1920, a three-man commission, which included Dzerzhinsky, to look further into the problem of eliminating banditry in the Ukraine, and to decide on the role of Ukrainian VNUS forces[241] (VNUS having taken over from VOKhR in September 1920). Accordingly, on 4 January 1921, the *Revvoensovet* and NKVD of the RSFSR jointly ordered M. V. Frunze, commander of

all troops in the Ukraine and the Crimea, to make full use of Ukrainian VNUS forces (which were now to be detached from the Ukrainian NKVD and integrated into the military machine) for the extirpation of banditry. As directed, Frunze established, on 24 January 1921, an inter-departmental Standing Conference for Combating Banditry, which included representatives of the Ukrainian NKVD, Cheka, and Special Department (OO);[242] however, this body was abolished on 19 February and replaced by an analogous Standing Conference, attached this time to the Ukrainian Sovnarkom.[243]

In the RSFSR (where VNUS Troops were formally transferred from NKVD to War Commissariat control on 19 January 1921) the Central Inter-Departmental Commission for Combating Banditry[244] held its first meeting on 27 January 1921, with Dzerzhinsky as chairman. It included representatives of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee, the Defence Council, the *Revvoensovet*, the Vecheka, CHON, NKPS, and the Red Army Command, and it functioned under the immediate supervision of the Party's Central Committee, the Sovnarkom and VTsIK. On 20 February, E. M. Sklianskii (Trotsky's deputy in the *Revvoensovet* and the War Commissariat) replaced Dzerzhinsky as the Commission's chairman, because the magnitude of the banditry problem exceeded the Vecheka's capacity to deal with it (as, for instance, in Tambov) and required major military action. The Commission met at least once a week to hear progress reports and to make recommendations to Party and Government.[245]

During 1921, both Belorussia and the Ukraine were exposed to external attack, since adjacent Polish and Romanian territory provided a base for trans-border incursions by armed detachments owing allegiance to Ataman Petliura, Boris Savinkov, and their allies. In particular, General Iurko Tiutiunnik, commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, distinguished himself by his daring raids.[246] In the month of July 1921, some 40 guerrilla groups, adding up to 1,500 men, were operating in just 6 Belorussian districts; they were reinforced by 4,000 men from Poland. In all, during 1921, Soviet frontiers were crossed by 15 sizeable raiding parties from Poland and 3 from Romania.[247] Meanwhile, guerrilla warfare flared up in Soviet Karelia, and took root in Western Siberia, calling for a substantial Cheka commitment,[248] whilst in Central Asia the Basmachi insurrection, led by Enver Pasha, necessitated the intervention of considerable forces, made up of the Red Army, CHON detachments, and Cheka contingents.[249] Eventually, Enver Pasha's men suffered defeat, and he himself was slain on 4 August 1922,[250] but it was some

time yet before the smouldering Basmachi rebellion was finally suppressed.[251]

The degree of success of the tactics employed against political banditry emerges, for instance, from the annual reports rendered by the Ukrainian Cheka to the Fifth (February/March 1921) and Sixth (mid-December 1921) Congresses of Soviets; these reports reviewed subversive manifestations occurring in the Ukraine in 1920 and 1921, and the counter-measures taken.[252] Such manifestations fell into several distinct categories: the extensive Polish espionage and sabotage networks deployed by the Polish Military Organisation, the POW,[253] some 200 of whose suspected members were arrested in Kiev alone in late 1919;[254] the widespread and turbulent 'nationalist–bourgeois political banditry' fomented by Petliura and other atamans fighting for an independent Ukraine;[255] Makhno's formidable 'bandit-anarchist' movement,[256] already described; the criminal banditry prevalent in the Ukraine;[257] the opposition socialist parties (Mensheviks, Right SRs, Left SRs, and Anarchists);[258] and, finally, the counter-revolutionary supporters of Denikin and Wrangel.

A fitting epitaph on the condition of Russia at the end of the Civil War was written by the Revolutionary Committee of the Kronstadt rebels:

> For three years the toilers of Soviet Russia have suffered in the torture chambers of the Chekas. Everywhere the Communist has wielded power over the peasant. A new Communist slavery has been created. The peasant has been transformed into a serf in the Soviet economy, the worker has become a mere employee in the state factories. The workers' intelligentsia has been eliminated. Those who tried to protest have been tortured by the Chekas. Those who continued to give trouble have been dealt with more expeditiously—they were shot. The air has become unbreathable. The whole of Soviet Russia has been turned into an immense penal servitude prison.[259]

Chapter XV

From Vecheka to GPU

The Cheka is dead, long live the transformed and renamed Cheka!

L. Martov, 'Prichesyvaiutsia', in
Sotsialisticheskii vestnik, No. 4 (26),
23 February 1922, p. 2[1]

Lenin's decision to introduce the New Economic Policy (NEP) carried two contrasting consequences: economic liberalisation on the one hand, but political tightening of the screws on the other. Such political constriction was applied both to the Communist Party (Lenin's banning of intra-party factionalism) and, much more drastically, to other socialist parties: Mensheviks and SRs were now subjected to even harsher repression than previously at the hands of the Cheka. Whatever economic concessions and doctrinaire retreats might be necessary to save the Soviet régime, Lenin was determined that the Communist Party dictatorship should exert an iron grip on the political and security situation.

Although Civil War on the external fronts had been successfully ended in November 1920, internally the Soviet régime remained under heavy stress: unrest among the industrial proletariat, mutiny in revolutionary Kronstadt, serious rebellion in Tambov, and similar 'political banditry' rife in many regions, especially in the Ukraine and in Siberia—all these and other danger signals gave the Party ample cause for alarm. Consequently, the Vecheka's services were still considerably in demand. At the Tenth Party Congress Zinoviev declared: 'I do not protest against the existence of an institution of ours called the Vecheka, although I know very well that such an institution is not in keeping with a workers' democracy. Without doubting that for a moment, I did not—and do not now—propose that the Vecheka should be abolished.'[2] On 17 March 1921, immediately after the Tenth Party Congress and on the day of the storming of Kronstadt, the Orgburo decided to strengthen the Vecheka by recalling for service former Chekists who could be spared from their current occupations.[3]

Nevertheless, the implementation of NEP and the relaxation of relations with other countries called for a new, liberalised image of

the Soviet state, an image that would not go well with the continued existence of the dreaded Cheka. For the Cheka had become ineradicably identified in the public mind with the Red Terror which, ever since the summer of 1918, had been taking so heavy a toll of human lives. The Vecheka openly admitted using terror for preventive purposes, and Dzerzhinsky himself had declared to the press in June 1918: 'We terrorise the enemies of the Soviet Government in order to stifle crime at its inception.'[4] Latsis, too, emphasised the purpose of deterrence, to be achieved by spreading fear: 'Above all, the highest measure of punishment [euphemism for the death penalty] was applied [by the Chekas] in order to exert influence upon counter-revolutionary elements, so as to produce the desired effect—intimidation. ... The Extraordinary Commissions always tried to conduct matters so, and to present themselves in such a way, that the mere mention of the Cheka might dispel any desire to commit sabotage, to extort and to conspire.'[5]

Deterrence was the essence of the terror as practised by the Chekas; the very fact that it was arbitrary, indiscriminate, and incalculable in its application heightened its pervasive, paralysing effect. But terror taken to such lengths could become counter-productive, both internally, in its effect on the economy, and externally, in frustrating the improvement of relations with capitalist states. Lenin's New Economic Policy required economic regeneration at home and political conciliation abroad; a precondition of both was the diminution of terror and (its corollary) the strengthening of the rule of law. Hence Lenin's logical decision to play down the political police, to restrict its powers, if only on the surface, and to change its name. Time would reveal that such concessions were made more in the letter than in the spirit of the new policy.

However, credit must be given, in this context, to Dzerzhinsky's early and apparently unsolicited initiative for reform. In a significant letter of 13 January 1921,[6] addressed to the Party's Central Committee, Dzerzhinsky set out the Vecheka's views and actions with regard to restriction of the death penalty, contraction of the Vecheka's punitive functions, and the need for systematisation of judicial machinery, now that the Civil War was over. The Vecheka had already sent, on 24 December 1920, a directive to all Provincial Chekas, forbidding executions without its express sanction, except in cases of open insurrection. (It will be recalled that in mid-January 1920 Dzerzhinsky had taken a similar initiative for abolition of the death penalty.) The Vecheka considered that the death penalty for *political* offences should apply only to insurgents and terrorists, but

that it should be applied mercilessly to all *criminal* offenders who materially impeded Russia's economic recovery. The Vecheka proposed that, except in areas in revolt, its judicial functions should be transferred to Revolutionary Tribunals, but that this ought to be effected not by decree but by inter-dcpartmental agreement, since 'the international and internal situations are quite complicated, and a degree of flexibility is indispensable for transition to conditions of peace'. A necessary precondition for the Vecheka's abdication of its judicial functions must be the simplification and strengthening of the legal system: the separate Military and Railway Tribunals should be abolished by merging with the standard Revolutionary Tribunals and People's Courts.

The Central Committee, meeting on 26 January, appointed a commission consisting of Dzerzhinsky, Kurskii, and Rykov, to look into the questions of penal policy and of reorganisation of tribunals.[7] In due course action followed to modify the law; this was preceded by press discussion of revolutionary legality, initiated in May 1921 in the columns of *Izvestia*, unanimously advocating the observance of legal norms and the ending of extra-judicial practices on the part of the Chekas.[8] On 23 June 1921, VTsIK passed a decree[9] unifying in one system, under a single Supreme Tribunal to which the conventional Revolutionary Tribunals were subordinated, the other hitherto independently functioning tribunals: the Revolutionary Military Tribunal, attached to the *Revvoensovet*, and the Chief Revolutionary Military Railway Tribunal, attached to the NKPS, together with their ancillary networks of lesser tribunals. Significantly, a Vecheka representative was to sit on the Supreme Tribunal. This same decree also restricted, albeit only marginally, the administrative authority of the Vecheka: it stipulated that detention by decision of the Chekas should be limited to two years and should apply solely to 'manifest White-Guard elements' and to persons belonging to anti-Soviet political parties (thereby embracing the socialist opposition). In areas under martial law, the Chekas' right to pronounce sentence, including sentence of death, was now restricted to three categories of cases, those of espionage, banditry, and participation in armed rebellion. All other offenders were to be handed over to the Revolutionary Tribunals or to People's Courts; the latter were to maintain special offices attached to all local Chekas.[10]

Towards the end of 1921, steps were taken to formulate a new statute for the political police, consonant with the mood of NEP. On 15 November, the Sovnarkom, with Lenin in the chair, appointed a commission of three, Dzerzhinsky, Kamenev, and Kurskii (who was

still People's Commissar for Justice), to work out arrangements regulating the NKIu's relations with the Vecheka, and in particular the NKIu's supervision of the Vecheka's investigative machinery.[11] Shortly afterwards Kamenev, when forwarding to Lenin the Vecheka Collegium's draft of a proposed new statute, which had Kurskii's backing, commented in his covering note that the draft represented Dzerzhinsky's maximum terms. Kamenev's own maximum terms were:

1 Relieve the Cheka of everything except political crimes, espionage, banditry, security of [rail-] roads and stores. Nothing more. The rest to go to the NKIu.
2 The Cheka's investigative apparatus to be merged with the NKIu, subordinating it to the Revolutionary Tribunals.

The Vecheka objected to the proposed transfer of its investigative machinery and regarded as premature the separation of political cases from those of major economic damage to the state or of misuse of authority.[12] Lenin, however, was determined to reform the Vecheka. In reply to Kamenev he wrote, on 29 November: 'Comrade Kamenev! My position is closer to yours than to Dzerzhinsky's. I advise you not to give way, and to raise [the issue] in the Politburo. Then we shall make a stand for the very maximum. In addition, we shall make the NKIu responsible for any failure to report to the Politburo (or Sovnarkom) on the Vecheka's defects and errors.'[13]

On 1 December, the Politburo approved Lenin's proposals for reforming the Vecheka and charged the commission, consisting of Kamenev, Kurskii, and Dzerzhinsky, to study the matter within five days, with a view to:

(a) restricting the Vecheka's competence
(b) restricting powers of arrest
(c) prescribing one month's time limit for general completion of cases
(d) strengthening the law courts
(e) considering the question of changing [the Vecheka's] name
(f) preparing, and effecting through VTsIK, a general decree introducing changes in the direction of marked moderation.[14]

The Party's Central Committee gave its attention, on 18 December, to the question of the Vecheka's powers,[15] and the Party's Eleventh Conference (19–22 December 1921) passed a resolution stating: 'New forms of relations, emerging in the process of revolution and on the basis of the economic policy pursued by the state, should be reflected in a law. ... The Soviet Republic's legal institutions should be raised to a corresponding level. The Vecheka's competence and sphere of activities should be correspondingly restricted and the

Vecheka itself reorganised.'[16] The conference resolution called for 'the establishment in all spheres of life of the strict principles of revolutionary legality'. 'Revolutionary legality' was the key phrase introduced and reiterated by Lenin at this time to emphasise that the Soviet régime, now firmly established, was basing itself on stable principles in place of the 'dictates of revolutionary conscience' and of the tenet of 'revolutionary expediency' which had hitherto guided the unpredictable operation of Soviet justice. A premature and forlorn initiative in this direction had been ventured in November 1918, in the resolution of the Sixth Congress of Soviets 'on the strict observance of laws', but the then obtaining conditions of civil war and counter-revolution had not been propitious for such a development.[17]

Lenin brought the issue before the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets on 23 December 1921. He said of the Vecheka:

> This is the institution which was our trenchant weapon against innumerable plots, innumerable attempts against Soviet authority by people who were infinitely stronger than ourselves. ... You know that it was impossible to counter them otherwise than by merciless, swift, instant repression, backed by the support of workers and peasants. That is the merit of our Vecheka. ... The workers' power could not exist without such an agency, so long as exploiters remain in being ... We shall continue to value and utilise such an agency as the Vecheka. That we can guarantee to all and sundry. But at the same time we state categorically that it is essential to subject the Vecheka to reform, to define its functions and competence, and to limit its work to political tasks. We are now faced with the task of developing private exchange—that is required by the New Economic Policy—and that calls for more revolutionary legality.[18]

There followed, on 28 December, a brief resolution by the Congress, praising the Vecheka for its past achievements, but ruling that its activities be restricted, and that judicial organs should assume the duty of dealing with infractions of Soviet law. The Congress requested the VTsIK Presidium to review urgently the existing Vecheka statute with a view to that agency's reorganisation, limitation of its competence, and to strengthening the foundations of revolutionary legality.[19]

The Vecheka fought a rearguard action to retain at least some of its threatened prerogatives and functions. The brunt fell on Unshlikht's shoulders, owing to Dzerzhinsky's prolonged absence: on 31 December 1921, the Politburo decided, upon the prompting of the Defence Council, to send Dzerzhinsky to Siberia, armed with plenipotentiary powers, in order to release supplies of foodstuffs which had become blocked by the breakdown of transport in the Siberian winter, and by the operations of insurgents. Dzerzhinsky's expedition

left Moscow for Siberia on 5 January, and did not return until 8 March 1922.[20] On 18 January, Unshlikht submitted to Lenin a fresh draft of the proposed Vecheka statute, formulated by the Vecheka Collegium. Under its terms, the Vecheka's functions were to be limited to combating counter-revolutionary activities—an extensive enough definition, susceptible to elastic interpretation—with the Vecheka retaining its punitive powers, its name, and its direct subordination to the Sovnarkom. In his covering note, Unshlikht insistently defended this draft; Lenin disagreed. He wrote in reply that Unshlikht's aims could and should be attained not by way of his proposals but through the draft worked out by the Central Committee's special commission. Lenin observed that Revolutionary Tribunals need not always conduct their business in public, that their personnel could be reinforced by inclusion of Chekists, that their contact with the Vecheka could be tightened, the speed and weight of their repressive measures increased; the Central Committee's attention should be directed to these points. The slightest increase in banditry, etc., should lead to imposition of martial law and summary execution. The Sovnarkom would be able to see to this swiftly; Lenin suggested that Unshlikht should consult Stalin.[21]

On 23 January 1922, the Politburo, having considered afresh the problem of the Vecheka's reorganisation, decided on the basic tasks and functions of the State Political Administration (*Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie*—GPU) which, replacing the Vecheka, was to be integrated in the NKVD.[22] The Politburo met again on 2 February (Lenin excused his absence owing to illness) to discuss the Vecheka, and approved a draft for its abolition; Unshlikht was instructed to present a decree on the GPU for preliminary agreement by the Politburo.[23] On 6 February, VTsIK finally passed this combined Vecheka-into-GPU decree[24] abolishing the Vecheka and transferring the following of its functions to the simultaneously established GPU, which was to be directed personally by the Chairman (i.e. Dzerzhinsky) or Deputy Chairman of the NKVD, of which Commissariat the GPU would constitute a component part: (a) suppression of overt counter-revolutionary activity, including banditry; (b) counter-espionage; (c) protection of railways and waterways; (d) political security of the RSFSR's frontiers; (e) guarding the RSFSR's frontiers against illegal crossing and smuggling.

Furthermore, the GPU stood at the disposal of the VTsIK Presidium and of the Sovnarkom 'for the fulfilment of any special assignments for the maintenance of revolutionary order'—a conveniently flexible clause. The general intent of the decree was to make

the GPU responsible for dealing solely with politically subversive activities; all other, purely criminal, matters were to be the preoccupation of the law courts and revolutionary tribunals. The Vecheka's powers of meting out summary sentence and punishment were not transferred to the GPU; neither was its right to confine in concentration camps by administrative order. The GPU and its organs were authorised to search and arrest, when necessary, persons involved in activities falling within GPU competence, subject to certain conditions: where such persons were caught red-handed on the scene of their crime, local GPU organs were empowered to take search and arrest action on their own initiative, provided that retrospective permission was obtained from the GPU within forty-eight hours, but in all other cases such authorisation had to be obtained in advance; the arrested person must be notified of the charge against him within fourteen days of arrest; within two months of arrest the arrested person must either be released or else sent to the courts for trial, unless the GPU secured the VTsIK Presidium's agreement to further detention. Meanwhile, all current Cheka cases falling outside the GPU's ambit must be transferred within two weeks of the decree's enactment to courts of law or to revolutionary tribunals. The NKIu was made responsible for supervising the GPU's observance of these arrest and detention regulations.

Structurally, the GPU followed very much the same pattern as the Vecheka, but using different terminology. At provincial level the Gub-Chekas were replaced by—or rather renamed—political departments (*polit-otdely*), which remained attached to the executive committees of the provincial Soviets.[25] In addition, although this was not mentioned in the GPU decree of 6 February, the GPU, like the Vecheka before it, had at its disposal at district level a large network of political bureaux (politburos), attached to district militias; the establishment of these politburos (originally District Chekas) was reduced during 1922 from 46 to 34 personnel per district.[26] The GPU also retained the Vecheka's Special Departments (OOs) and Transport Departments;[27] on 1 March 1922, the Vecheka Troops were reorganised as Troops of the GPU, under an Administration of Troops.[28] The Frontier Troops, which had been lost to the Vecheka by Defence Council order of 21 October 1921, were presently restored to the political police by a further Defence Council ordinance of 27 September 1922, forming a Separate Frontier Corps under the GPU.[29]

The Vecheka's general organisation and its headquarters personnel were handed over to the GPU virtually intact. However, a substantial

overall reduction of staff was under way: the strength of the political police, which stood at 143,000 in December 1921, sank by May 1922 to 105,000,[30] at which level its personnel establishment was put by the statute of 15 September 1922.[31]

Although the GPU was incorporated in the NKVD, instead of being (like the Vecheka) directly subordinated to the Sovnarkom, its Chairman, Dzerzhinsky, in his capacity as People's Commissar for the NKVD of the RSFSR—a post retained by him until his replacement on 7 July 1923 by his NKVD deputy, A. G. Beloborodov[32]—continued to speak for the political police in the Sovnarkom. By its formal integration in the NKVD under statute, the political police now became a regular department of state, shedding its previous ill-defined, provisional status, along with its title of Extraordinary Commission. Fundamentally, however, the GPU (like its predecessor, the Vecheka, and its successor, the OGPU) stood under the direct control of the highest organ of power, the Politburo of the Communist Party.

THE GPU STRENGTHENED AND TERROR CONTINUED

The GPU's powers of detention and punishment did not remain restricted for long. The VTsIK Presidium could in any event be relied upon to extend, beyond the statutory two-month period, the detention of persons deemed dangerous or undesirable by the GPU. Although the provisions of the GPU decree of 6 February 1922, safeguarding the individual against arbitrary detention, were optimistically described by Kurskii as equivalent to *habeas corpus*,[33] their practical effect was rather that of *habeas cadaver*. Nor did Lenin intend to bind the GPU by the decree's restrictions on its punitive powers; on 1 March 1922 he wrote to Peters, who had complained that the dissolution of the Vecheka was untimely and that all sorts of disorders were rife, including bribery: 'Comrade Peters! Because of illness I cannot unfortunately see you. As regards bribery, etc., the State Political Administration can and should combat and punish by shooting through the law courts. The GPU should come to an agreement with the NKIu, and should get the Politburo to issue a suitable directive to the NKIu and to all organs.'[34]

Even before this, on 20 February, just a fortnight after abolishing the Cheka, Lenin wrote a highly confidential letter to Kurskii, Commissar for Justice, with copies for the Politburo and for the VTsIK Presidium, in which he rebuked the NKIu for not fulfilling its responsibilities under the new conditions of NEP:

> Formerly the combat organs of the Soviet régime were, chiefly, the People's Commissariat for War and the Vecheka. Now this particularly militant role falls to the NKIu; unfortunately there is no sign of understanding of this on the part of the NKIu's leadership and of its principal executives. The intensification of repression against enemies of Soviet authority and agents of the bourgeoisie (especially the Mensheviks and the SRs); the implementation of such repression through revolutionary tribunals and people's courts in the most speedy and revolutionary-minded manner; the essential staging of a series of model trials (exemplary as regards swiftness and strength of repression, and as regards education of the masses through the courts and the press concerning that repression's meaning) in Moscow, Petrograd, Kharkov, and several other major centres; the bringing of influence to bear, through the Party, upon people's judges and members of revolutionary tribunals, with a view to improving the courts' performance and to intensifying repression ...

—all this, wrote Lenin, should be done systematically and persistently. Similarly, exploiters of NEP should be punished mercilessly, to the point of applying the death penalty.[35]

Lenin continued to put pressure on Kurskii. On 15 May he wrote: 'Comrade Kurskii! In my view the application of shooting must be extended ... to all aspects of Menshevik, SR, etc., activity; a formula should be found associating such activity with the international bourgeoisie.'[36] (This was shortly before the Right SR Party leadership was put on trial and a number of defendants given suspended death sentences.) Two days later, Lenin sent Kurskii a draft paragraph for the envisaged Criminal Code, and wrote: 'The law should not abolish terror: to promise that would be self-delusion or deception; it should be substantiated and legalised in principle, clearly, without evasion or embellishment. The paragraph on terror should be formulated as widely as possible, since only revolutionary consciousness of justice and revolutionary conscience can determine the conditions of its application in practice.'[37]

The GPU played its part in this continuing régime of terror. Under the terms of its founding decree, the GPU initially lacked the Cheka's prerogative of passing and carrying out extra-judicial sentence. This deprivation was designed to demonstrate that the rule of law was paramount under the liberalised conditions of NEP. But Lenin still required the isolation or elimination of militant class enemies, as also of political adversaries such as Mensheviks, SRs, and Anarchists. Consequently, the GPU was soon equipped with wide extra-judicial powers. Under the VTsIK decree of 10 August 1922,[38] the GPU was authorised to exile, by administrative order, either abroad or to designated localities within the RSFSR (for residence there under local GPU supervision), for a period not exceeding three years,

persons engaging in 'counter-revolutionary activity'. Such procedure had to receive the assent of a Special Commission (*Osobaia Komissiia*) of the NKVD, chaired by the latter's Chairman and composed of NKVD (i.e. probably GPU) and NKIu representatives. Furthermore, under the decree of 16 October 1922,[39] the GPU was authorised, in cases of banditry, to punish by summary process, including execution, any persons caught red-handed on the scene of their crime. The decree also conferred upon the NKVD Special Commission the right to exile and to confine in forced labour camps at the place of exile, for a period not exceeding three years, 'activists of anti-Soviet political parties' and certain categories of criminals upon their second conviction for criminal offences. Doubtless the NKVD Special Commission gave its automatic assent to GPU recommendations for such banishment of members of the socialist opposition parties, who now received the same harsh treatment as hardened criminals.

Though the GPU's numbers could not match those of the Vecheka, this did not necessarily signify a lessening in effectiveness. The GPU's grip on subversive or politically hostile elements remained firm, and was indeed fortified, for instance through the final elimination of the socialist opposition parties. Nor should the Vecheka's or GPU's strength be measured solely in terms of established personnel. From the Vecheka the GPU inherited a vast system of agents, informers, and contacts, which permeated a large part of the country's population. In 1921–2, some Chekists reckoned, maybe extravagantly, that one in every four city dwellers was a secret informant.[40] Available documents bear out that by 1920 the emphasis was on spreading the Cheka contact net to cover wide aspects of society and of the economy. A Vecheka top secret circular of 1 June 1920 urged the procurement of an extensive apparatus of secret informants, concentrated especially in the domains of transport, food supply, and military organisation.[41] An Odessa Provincial Cheka top secret report of February 1921 referred to the current work of recruitment of informer networks in all factories, institutes and military units where political disaffection was manifesting itself; 'the resulting intelligence makes it possible to assess clearly the attitude of workers and employees of any given institution and enterprise'.[42]

Dzerzhinsky, in his instruction of 8 January 1921 'On the penal policy of Cheka organs', laid down that, since the Civil War had now been won, the rough and ready methods of mass arrest applied on the basis of class distinction should no longer be practised; instead of wholesale detention of suspect categories such as ex-officers, Right

SRs, etc., these should in future be kept under discreet surveillance, necessitating a gigantic and continuing security operation.[43] Latsis, writing in late 1920, put the Vecheka's aim as the virtually total supervision of Soviet society:

> Counter-revolution has developed everywhere, in all spheres of our life, manifesting itself in the most diverse forms. It is therefore clear that the work of the Vecheka must also extend over all those spheres of Soviet life where counter-revolution has taken root. And that means that there is no sphere of life exempt from Vecheka coverage. The Vecheka must look after everything: the armed forces, food production, education and culture, all economic organisations, medical services, fire prevention, the communications system, etc., etc. The Vecheka can only deal with this task successfully with the aid of all Soviet-minded citizens, with the full support of leading personnel in all Soviet Commissariats.[44]

Already discernible in these aspirations to complete police coverage, in support of the Communist Party's bid for total political and economic control, is the embryo of the totalitarian police state of the Stalin era.

On the surface, the abolition of the Vecheka appeared to be a significant reform, in line with the liberalisation consequent upon the New Economic Policy. Lenin made a particular point of changing the Vecheka's name—a symbolic act of disassociation from the old order. But in substance the old order survived; the political police, reincarnated in the GPU, very soon recovered many of the arbitrary powers of its predecessor. For Lenin, NEP and its consequences represented a vital breathing space, a temporary tactic which did not detract from the long-term revolutionary aims of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In conditions of internal crisis and capitalist encirclement, it was a case of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. In his speech of 5 July 1921, at the Third Comintern Congress, Lenin asserted: 'Dictatorship is a state of intensified war. We are precisely in that state now. At the moment there is no military invasion. However we are isolated. ... Until the final issue is decided, the state of terrible war will continue. And we say: war is war, we do not promise any freedom nor any democracy.'[45]

The dictatorship of the proletariat continued to be based on coercion and political terror. Aptly, the Russian word *cheka* means linchpin. Just as, true to this meaning, the Cheka had in its time served the beleaguered Bolshevik régime as a vital linchpin,[46] so now its successors, the GPU, OGPU, and NKVD, formally integrated into the fabric of the state apparatus, would similarly secure the rule of

Lenin's heirs. The pattern of the Soviet police state had been established.

THE POLITICAL POLICE AND PARTY DISPUTES

The Vecheka was not used, as its successors would be, as a weapon in internal Party conflicts. When, on 26 October 1920, Lenin pushed through the Politburo the appointment of Bukharin and Dzerzhinsky to head the Party's Central Control Commission (of which Dzerzhinsky had been elected a member in late September)[47] in order to deal with misfits and dissidents within the Party, he outlined a concept of treatment of such cases which any self-regarding association of psycho-analysts would have commended:

> The Control Commission is to be encouraged to apply, as its particular mission, a carefully individualised approach, indeed often a kind of healing treatment in relation to representatives of the so-called opposition, who have suffered a psychological crisis caused by failure in their state or party career. An effort should be made to reassure them, to explain the matter to them in a comradely way, and (without dragooning them) to find them work suited to their psychological idiosyncracies, giving them counsel and advice from the Orgburo of the Central Committee.'[48]

Such a recommendation of psycho-therapeutic treatment was in marked contrast to Lenin's brusque conclusion five months later, at the Tenth Party Congress, that it was time to 'put the lid on opposition', time to ban all factionalism within the Party.[49] External criticism, as expressed by opposing revolutionary parties, had by then been eliminated; now, by suppressing all organised internal Party dissent, Lenin was laying the foundations of the monolithic totalitarian party, whose autocratic leader alone possessed a monopoly of wisdom and power.

The full implications of Lenin's authoritarian decision took time to mature. Meanwhile, so long as Lenin remained at the helm (a brief period, for his first incapacitating stroke occurred on 26 May 1922), relative harmony reigned at the Party summit, and the political police functioned as the impartial instrument of the Central Committee, without intruding on internecine Party feuds. True, Dzerzhinsky was drawn into witch-hunting operations within the Party: in May 1921 he, together with Stalin and Frunze, was directed by the Central Committee to investigate Tomskii's 'anti-Party activity in the trade unions',[50] whilst in late March/April 1922 he partnered Stalin, Zinoviev, Petrovskii, and others on a commission established by the Eleventh Party Congress to deal with the Workers' Opposition group ('the case of the twenty-two') headed by A. G. Shliapnikov and

Alexandra Kollontai,[51] besides participating in the Party purge which, opening in October 1921, radically reduced the Party's membership,[52] but in these various contexts he was acting in a purely Party capacity, as a member of the Central Committee and of its Orgburo, whilst the political police does not appear to have been involved.

In Lenin's eyes the Vecheka constituted an executive arm of the Party; the one was directly identified with the other. On 3 April 1920, at the Ninth Party Congress, he had declared: 'A good Communist is at the same time a good Chekist',[53] a sentiment echoed a few weeks later by Ksenofontov, Deputy Chairman of the Vecheka, who on 27 May 1920 told members of the visiting British Labour Delegation that his organisation was assisted by the Communist Party, all of whose members considered it to be their duty to report to the Vecheka any act hostile to the Soviet Government.[54] What Lenin failed to foresee was that when the Party became riven by inner conflicts (for factionalism could be prohibited but not prevented), the political police would be used by the dominant Party group as a decisive weapon in the power struggle against rival Party factions. By degrees the political police was drawn into the Party in-fighting. When, in September 1923, the Central Committee set up a sub-committee, chaired by Dzerzhinsky, to look into the internal situation of the Party, the sub-committee recommended that Party members should be obliged to report to the GPU (as well as to the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission) any evidence that came to their knowledge concerning factions within the Party, thus turning Communists into informers on their Party comrades. At this time the GPU began to arrest Party members belonging to the Workers' Group on charges of factionalism.[55] An ominous precedent had been set.

FROM GPU TO OGPU

The status of the political police was significantly enhanced while the ailing Lenin still lived. On 30 December 1922, the self-constituted First Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics approved the proposed formation of the USSR, with the RSFSR as one of its constituent republics. The USSR Constitution, adopted on 6 July 1923 (and finally ratified on 31 January 1924), provided for three categories of people's commissariats: the all-union commissariats (responsible for foreign affairs, defence, etc.) which existed only in the central government, i.e. in the Sovnarkom of the USSR; the unified commissariats, which existed both at USSR level and in the union republics, with the latter executing decisions taken at the

centre; and the republic commissariats, which existed only at republic level. The NKVD fitted into the third category. As a special case, under article 61 of the Constitution, the GPU—now renamed OGPU (acronym of Unified State Political Administration)[56] —was lifted out of the republic-level NKVD of the RSFSR and was attached direct to the Sovnarkom of the USSR, whilst functioning locally through the GPUs of the USSR's constituent republics, to whose governments OGPU plenipotentiary representatives were attached; in effect the OGPU enjoyed unified commissariat status.[57] Article 63 prescribed that the activities of the OGPU should be supervised by the Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of the USSR, which provision, however, meant little in practice since the Prosecutor was simply another agent of the same Party dictatorship, and wielded less effective power than the political police.[58] Continuity of leadership was maintained: on 18 September 1923, the Sovnarkom of the USSR appointed Dzerzhinsky to be OGPU Chairman, with Menzhinsky and Yagoda designated as First and Second Deputy Chairmen.[59] The OGPU's powers and functions were set out in a USSR TsIK Presidium decree of 15 November 1923,[60] under which both the OGPU Chairman and his Deputy served as *ex officio* members of the Sovnarkom of the USSR, with a consultative vote. The political police was now enshrined in the Constitution, and its writ ran throughout the Soviet Union.

Epilogue

Whoever wants to arrive at Socialism by a different road, other than that of political democracy, will inevitably arrive at absurd and reactionary conclusions, both in the economic and the political sense.

Lenin, in *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Geneva, August 1905, quoted by John Plamenatz in *German Marxism and Russian Communism*, London, 1954, p. 229

Lenin ... is a political Jesuit, who for many years has adapted Marxism to his aims of the moment, and has ended by entangling himself.

V. R. Menzhinsky (anonymously signed S.-D.), in article 'Lenin', *Nashe Ekho*, Paris, 15 July 1915, p. 7[1]

DZERZHINSKY'S ESTRANGEMENT FROM LENIN

Dzerzhinsky's very close relationship with Lenin had not inhibited him from going his own way on policy issues until such time as the Party line had been finally hammered out in the Central Committee. On several notable occasions he diverged significantly from Lenin: for instance on the nationality question debated at the Seventh Bolshevik Party Conference in April 1917, when Dzerzhinsky, the pupil of Rosa Luxemburg, spoke against the right of national self-determination, accusing Lenin of supporting separatist tendencies which weakened the Russian proletariat—in particular he contended that the advocacy of Polish independence would solely benefit Polish national-chauvinists;[2] there was conflict again in the bitter debate of February–March 1918 concerning acceptance of the draconic German peace terms of Brest-Litovsk, when Dzerzhinsky and Trotsky adopted a neo-Bukharinist Left-Communist position opposed to the peace treaty—though in the critical Central Committee vote on 23 February, which Lenin won by seven votes to four, with four abstentions, Dzerzhinsky as well as Trotsky compromised by abstaining;[3] yet again, in the trade union controversy leading up to the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, Dzerzhinsky, together with Bukharin and others, supported Trotsky's platform advocating the militarisation of trade unions, in the interest of economic efficiency.[4] There was an affinity between Dzerzhinsky's internationalist outlook and that of Trotsky—between

the former's Luxemburgist ideology and the latter's doctrine of permanent revolution.[5]

In December 1922–January 1923, when Lenin was already incapacitated by his second stroke, his previously excellent rapport with Dzerzhinsky suffered considerable strain. In December, Dzerzhinsky reported back to the Central Committee on his mission to Georgia to inquire into the bitter dispute over Georgian independence, seething between the Moscow-based Stalin and Ordzhonikidze, and the local Communist leadership. Dzerzhinsky's report in effect exonerated Stalin. Lenin, who was on the point of breaking off relations with Stalin, as is evidenced by his political testament and its codicils, criticised Stalin and Ordzhonikidze for their cavalier treatment of the Georgian leadership, accusing these two (both, paradoxically, themselves Georgian by birth, and Russian only by adoption) of Great-Russian chauvinism; he also criticised Dzerzhinsky: 'I fear' wrote Lenin, 'that Dzerzhinsky too ... has distinguished himself here by his truly Russian attitude (it is well known that Russified aliens always overdo things in trying to show themselves to be authentic Russians).'[6] At this point it was Lenin's intention to demote Stalin and Dzerzhinsky, removing the latter from the Commissariat of Communications[7] (though not necessarily from the Cheka), but his third stroke, occurring in March 1923, intervened before he could take action at the Twelfth Party Congress convened for April.

Prior to this episode, Lenin had placed absolute trust in Dzerzhinsky, valuing highly his revolutionary passion, his abundant energy, and his administrative ability, though evidently not his political talents: in his testament he did not even mention Dzerzhinsky among his political heirs. Dzerzhinsky, over-modestly, admitted his inadequacy as a politician; he several times told Trotsky: 'I am not a bad revolutionary, perhaps, but I am no leader, statesman or politician.' On the other hand, as is clear from Dzerzhinsky's differences with Lenin, Trotsky went too far in asserting that Dzerzhinsky had no opinions of his own and always needed someone to guide him in political matters;[8] he was perfectly capable of stubbornly defending his deeply felt convictions. What Dzerzhinsky lacked as a statesman and political theorist (he made no contribution to Marxist or Party doctrine), he more than compensated for by his revolutionary temperament and his practical organisational achievements; he was a doer, *par excellence*, not a thinker.

According to Trotsky, an estrangement developed between Dzerzhinsky and Lenin when Dzerzhinsky realised that Lenin did not

consider him capable of directing economic work. Trotsky has written: 'as long as Lenin lived, it was out of the question to include him [Dzerzhinsky] in the Politburo. In 1921, or it may have been in 1922, Dzerzhinsky, an exceedingly proud man, complained to me, with a note of resignation in his voice, that Lenin did not consider him a political figure.'[9] It was this resentment, so Trotsky maintained, that threw Dzerzhinsky into Stalin's arms, whereas initially he had been drawn to Trotsky,[10] and devoted to Lenin. It is indisputable that Dzerzhinsky's political star ascended rapidly after Lenin's death on 21 January 1924; no sooner had Dzerzhinsky (who was in charge of Lenin's funeral arrangements)[11] buried his leader, than, on 2 February 1924, he was appointed Chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy (VSNKh), thus becoming overlord of the Soviet Union's entire economic system. He owed this post, which he held while still heading the OGPU, to the influence of Stalin,[12] who had officiated since 3 April 1922 as General Secretary of the Central Committee's Secretariat—and thus of the Party. It was Stalin, too, who eased Dzerzhinsky's entry, on 2 June 1924, following the Thirteenth Party Congress, into the Politburo as a candidate-member;[13] previously Dzerzhinsky had solely attained the less exalted status, first, of Orgburo candidate-member (on 5 April 1920, after the Ninth Party Congress),[14] and subsequently of full member of the Orgburo (in April 1922, after the Eleventh Party Congress).[15] Moreover, Lenin was already a mortally sick man when Dzerzhinsky was appointed, on 17 July 1923, to the Defence Council.[16]

It was only when, during Lenin's sickness and after his death, a contest for the political succession developed between Stalin and Trotsky, that Dzerzhinsky was forced to take sides and chose his benefactor Stalin. But whatever Dzerzhinsky's obligations to Stalin, there is no indication that he ever allowed any personal sentiment or self-interest to override his stern sense of duty; his loyalty to his concept of the Revolution was incorruptible. He certainly did not kow-tow to Stalin; on one occasion, in 1925 or early 1926, he engaged in such a stormy quarrel with him that he suffered a heart attack.[17]

LENIN'S VOLTE-FACE

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. This adage applies not merely to the cynical charade of the Vecheka's transformation into the GPU, but also to the about-turn performed by certain key Soviet institutions which under Lenin reverted to a pre-revolutionary pattern. In his last articulate months, before his third stroke silenced him in March 1923, Lenin entertained misgivings regarding the gains of the

Communist Revolution.[18] His régime, having opened hopefully with the libertarian experiment of workers' control, had then oscillated to the opposite extreme of militarisation of labour, before swinging over to the mixed economy of NEP. NEP was a calculated, time-buying, tactical retreat, but could the same be said of compromises in other domains of the Soviet system? Writing *The State and Revolution* in 1917, Lenin had vowed to demolish three essential bastions of bourgeois capitalism: after seizing power, the proletariat, organised as the ruling revolutionary class, would have the opportunity 'to crush, to smash to atoms, to wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican bourgeois, state machine: the standing army, the police and bureaucracy; to substitute for all this a *more* democratic, but still a state machine in the shape of the armed masses of workers who become transformed into a universal people's militia'.[19]

Subsequently, speaking on 8 March 1918 at the Seventh Party Congress, and reviewing the achievements so far of the Bolshevik régime, Lenin had declared: 'Soviet power is a new type of state in which there is no bureaucracy, no standing army, no police. ...', and he had gone on to assert: 'The state is a machine for coercion. The exploiters must be suppressed, but they should not be suppressed by the police, they can only be suppressed by the masses.'[20] At that juncture Lenin was still deluding himself that a professional police was no more necessary than a regular army: he was possessed by his vision of a part-time 'universal people's militia' which should do duty as police and army and administration. As for the Vecheka, that was seen as an improvised *ad hoc* agency, in no way intended to become an institutionalised feature.

All too soon Lenin's vision vanished: on 26 March 1918, a Lenin decree ended workers' control on the railroads[21]—an initial step towards the replacement of workers' control over industry by a state system of bureaucratically controlled labour compulsion; a decree of 22 April[22] introduced military conscription as a basis for building the regular Red Army; and the same month saw the first initiative taken in the direction of a centralised, full-time militia, i.e. a professional police force; meanwhile the temporary and 'extra-ordinary' Vecheka was beginning to take shape as a ubiquitous security apparatus. And now, at the start of 1923, over two years since the end of the Civil War, here was the Soviet state still saddled with a flourishing bureaucracy, a regular Red Army, a professional militia, and an entrenched political police. The wheel had come full circle. Was it for this ironic ending that the Revolution had been carried out, the Civil War fought? It was a bitter *dénouement*. Lenin had led a sustained

crusade against bureaucracy only to conclude, in February 1923, that his chosen vehicle for bureaucratic reform, *Rabkrin* (the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate), until recently headed by Stalin, had utterly failed in its purpose.[23] As for the vigorous survival of the standing army and police, Lenin the utopian may have comforted himself casuistically by reflecting that these were purely temporary devices—to be dispensed with just as soon as the dictatorship of the proletariat was firmly established, if not throughout the world, then at least over Europe. But Lenin the pragmatist must have accepted that the prospects for such a consummation were negligible at present, and that for the foreseeable future the Red Army, the regular militia, and the political police would remain indispensable.

The Vecheka had been founded explicitly as a temporary organ, an 'Extraordinary Commission' which, as Latsis wrote in 1920, 'has no place in our constitutional system. The time of civil war, the time of extraordinary conditions of existence of Soviet power, will pass, and the Chekas will become superfluous.'[24] Zinoviev, addressing a Chekist conference in Petrograd in October 1918, looked to the time when all Chekas would be disbanded and a kindergarten replaced the Petrograd Cheka at No. 2 Gorokhovaia Street.[25] But both Latsis and Zinoviev postulated that Communism must be victorious outside Russia before the Chekas could wither away. 'Only a world socialist revolution can guarantee the destruction of the bourgeoisie' affirmed Zinoviev. And he pictured Bokii, Chairman of the Petrograd Cheka, proceeding to Berlin to lecture on the Cheka system, and convoking a world conference of Chekas.[26] Meanwhile, in the course of time, with world revolution still out of sight, the Chekas grew roots in Soviet soil until eventually the political police became established as a regular department of state under the terms of the USSR Constitution of July 1923. *Ce n'est que le provisoire qui dure*: the temporary expedient had come to stay. In extenuation it may be remarked that the Soviet installation of a political police system represented the continuation of a Russian authoritarian tradition of many centuries, with but the briefest interval of liberty—though some might call it chaos—under the ephemeral, liberal-democratic Provisional Government of 1917. The Vecheka could be regarded as simply following in the footsteps of the Okhrana.

THE OKHRANA AND THE VECHEKA COMPARED

The analogy with the Okhrana is self-evident: both were political police agencies designed to protect a despotic régime against subversion. In this they appeared to be two of a kind, but the

difference in scale of their operation—their quantitative disproportion—was such as to create a qualitative disparity, a difference in kind. Let us briefly compare them in achievement, in size, in powers, and in cost of human lives. As already indicated, the twentieth-century Okhrana was on the whole remarkably successful in penetrating and politically neutralising its adversaries, the revolutionary parties, especially the Bolsheviks. True, over the period 1901–5 it manifestly failed to prevent a series of spectacular assassinations of prominent ministers and police officials, or the killings, during the following few years, of hundreds of humbler Tsarist functionaries;[27] the Okhrana's incompetence in this regard was further demonstrated by the assassination in 1911 of Stolypin, Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, by none other than an Okhrana agent.[28] Nor did the Okhrana succeed in stemming the revolutionary tide of 1905–7; however, over the ensuing decade it effectively contained the revolutionary movement, which indeed had no hand in launching the February Revolution.

The Cheka, too, had its not dissimilar failures; it was unable to avert either the assassinations of Volodarskii and Uritskii or the attempt on Lenin's life, all three acts being committed by unconnected SRs of various hues—but then there can never be an absolute guarantee against assassination. Far worse, though, the Cheka not only proved incapable of suppressing the LSR Rising of July 1918, which all but dislodged the Bolshevik régime, but it even served as the springboard for that revolt, and in the process humiliatingly lost its leader, its headquarters, and its armed detachment to the rebels. Subsequently, however, the Cheka redeemed itself impressively in protecting the Bolshevik dictatorship, an insecure, narrowly based régime which had to contend on the home front with counter-revolutionary conspiracies, nationalist revolt, widespread peasant insurrection, periodic industrial unrest, occasional military mutiny, and political competition from rival socialist parties, besides facing the constant threat of famine. In such a desperate predicament Lenin's government had to rely, for its internal defence, on coercion and terror exercised by an agency competent to tackle subversion in these diverse spheres. The ubiquitous Cheka fulfilled these requirements admirably, if not always single-handedly. It also helped to police the frontiers, the railways, and waterways, saw to the security of the Red Army, investigated economic and administrative malpractices, besides assisting to mobilise labour, to combat desertion, to suppress child delinquency, and to deal with a variety of other problems which called for swift and resolute action. Overall, the

verdict must be that the Cheka served the Bolshevik régime very effectively.

The size of the two police organisations differed in proportion to their tasks: the Okhrana managed to counter political subversion throughout the Tsarist Empire, relying on the Special Corps of Gendarmes, an élite force of 15,000 men. In sharp contrast the Cheka, when at its zenith in mid-1921, amounted to some 250,000 men, giving a ratio of one Okhrannik to seventeen Chekists. Even if we discount the 100,000 or so Frontier Troops (which were detached from the political police in October 1921, though reassigned to it in September 1922) and take instead the Vecheka's strength of 143,000 personnel as at December 1921,[29] we still arrive at a ratio of one Okhrannik to nine Chekists. Moreover, we are confining ourselves here to the Vecheka of the RSFSR, omitting the very substantial Cheka of the Ukraine, and those of the Caucasian republics and of Belorussia, whereas the Okhrana covered the whole Empire, including the Tsar's important Polish, Finnish, and Baltic territories (lost to the Soviets), making the contrast even starker. This Chekist preponderance is not surprising: the precarious and illegitimate Bolshevik régime, battling for survival in circumstances of perpetual crisis, required massive political police support.

Even more striking is the contrast between the number of executions occurring during the last fifty years of Tsarist rule, estimated by one authority (on the basis of the most generous Soviet sources of information) at not more than 14,000, and, on the other hand, those effected during the six years under Lenin, estimated by the same authority at not less than 200,000.[30] If we deduct executions caused by non-Chekist agencies, and limit ourselves to the Vecheka period, we may arrive at an estimate of perhaps 140,000 executions attributable to the Chekas of the various Soviet republics and to the Internal Security Troops under Vecheka control.[31] As stated in Appendix C, the vast majority of the 14,000 Tsarist executions represented reprisals for the several thousand political assassinations following the Revolution of 1905.

Tsarist death sentences, however, were pronounced not by the Okhrana, but by courts of law or, as in the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution, by Military District Courts and Field Courts Martial.[32] For, unlike the Chekas, the Okhrana exercised virtually no extra-judicial powers: its rights were restricted to searches, preventive arrest, and detention for a strictly limited period of preliminary investigation; at most it could initiate a recommendation for the administrative exile (for a term not exceeding five years) of persons

deemed 'harmful to the state and to public tranquillity'.[33] The Okhrana did not run prisons, and had no opportunity to use torture; it was accountable, through the Department of Police, to the Minister of Internal Affairs, and was bound to obey the laws of the land. By contrast, the Cheka exercised extra-judicial summary powers of life and death, and acted as policeman, gaoler, investigator, prosecutor, judge, and executioner; its sentences were pronounced perfunctorily *in camera*, in the absence of the accused. Unlike the Okhrana, the Cheka system enjoyed wide autonomy, being ultimately accountable, in theory, to the Council of People's Commissars, but in practice solely to the Politburo, the fount of all power. The Politburo was far too preoccupied with other weighty problems to find time to supervise the Cheka.

Leaving aside executions, it seems likely that at least another 140,000 persons were killed by the Chekas and Internal Security Troops in the suppression of insurrections throughout Soviet territory during 1918–21.[34] Our previously quoted authority puts the number of deaths resulting from insurrections and from prison and camp treatment during 1918–23 at a minimum of 300,000, but here again we must deduct those deaths occurring after the Cheka period or at Red Army hands, thus bringing the total down to the figure of 140,000 ventured above. The equivalent loss of life (through pogroms or in prison) over the last fifty years of Tsarist rule has been estimated, by the same authority, at not more than 11,000.[35] However, it should be stressed that any estimate of the massive number of deaths occurring over the period 1918–21, whether resulting directly from the Chekas or from other forms of terror, must be taken, in W. H. Chamberlin's prudent words, as highly conjectural and approximate.[36] The true number of Cheka victims will probably never be known, even if the Vecheka's records have survived intact and are opened to outside inspection. There does exist, in fact, some circumstantial evidence suggesting that Lenin may have had the Vecheka's archive—or at least an important part of it—deliberately destroyed, so that the record of the Vecheka's implementation of the Red Terror, and of his own considerable responsibility for this process of social extermination, should not go down to posterity: 'Let history judge us by our other deeds' was Lenin's reported comment.[37]

To sum up: the Okhrana and the Cheka had similar aims, in the pursuit of which each service in its own way proved remarkably successful, but there was a world of difference between their powers and methods. That is not to deny that Tsarist Russia was a despotic monarchy (though latterly evolving towards a constitutional form of

government), which, after the 1905 Revolution, applied savage penalties, executing several thousand persons and sentencing many more to penal servitude and internal exile. But such retribution was visited upon revolutionaries for specific acts of revolt or subversion against the state. The Cheka, on the other hand, executed innocent hostages and 'class enemies'.

WAS THE CHEKA NECESSARY?

The Vecheka certainly proved effective in protecting the highly vulnerable Soviet régime on the home front, but how essential was it to that régime's survival? The ex-Deputy Chairman of the Vecheka/GPU, Unshlikht, speaking on the tenth anniversary of the Vecheka's foundation, asserted: 'Without the Vecheka and the OGPU, the realisation and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat would not have been possible.'[38] The initial realisation of the Soviet dictatorship *had* in fact come about without Cheka aid, for the Vecheka did not begin to play a vital role until midway through 1918; however, for its subsequent consolidation and eventual victory the régime was deeply indebted to the Vecheka's application of ruthless terror and to its efficient suppression of major conspiracies.

A contrary standpoint was adopted by that idealistic revolutionary, Victor Serge, who maintained that 'the formation of the Chekas was one of the gravest and most impermissible errors that the Bolsheviks committed'; in his view all the evidence indicated that 'revolutionary tribunals, functioning in the light of day ... and admitting the right of defence, would have attained the same efficiency with far less abuse and depravity. Was it necessary to resort to the procedures of the Inquisition?'[39] But that, surely, is begging the question and denying the very nature of Leninism: it is axiomatic that, once Lenin had seized power for the avowed purpose of single-party rule despite that party's numerical inferiority and in the face of opposition from every quarter, he was committed—whether he wanted it or not (but in fact he did want it, and said so)–to a régime of political terror in which some apparatus was required to implement that terror. In such circumstances the Revolutionary Tribunals were not an acceptable substitute: being bound by rules (however flimsy) of judicial procedure, they could not attain the same massive efficiency, the same paralysing effect, as the Chekas, whose strength and purpose lay precisely in imposing the Bolshevik régime's will by ruthless methods, regardless of any criteria of justice, or of the cost in human life. In this sense, yes, the Chekas were necessary and indeed indispensable.

To adapt Voltaire: *si la Tchéka n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer.* Terror was implicit in Leninism, and the Vecheka was vital to terror.

Equally, without the Vecheka's successors, the OGPU and the NKVD, Stalin's inhuman compulsory collectivisation of agriculture, his vast system of concentration camp forced labour, and the mass purges of the thirties, could not have happened: a police state, backed by terror, was an essential pre-condition for the occurrence of all three phenomena. This savage aftermath of Lenin's rule was by no means its inevitable consequence, but it was Lenin who laid the police-state foundations which made Stalin's monstrous feats technically possible.

LENIN'S LEGACY TO HIS HEIRS

Lenin had also opened the way for the assumption of political power by a dictator. By early 1921, with intra-Party factions banned and power increasingly concentrated at the pinnacle of the Politburo (to which the Cheka was directly subordinated), the Leninist Party's rule had degenerated far in the direction of that condition of autocracy so prophetically predicted by Trotsky soon after Lenin had split the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1903: 'These methods lead, as we shall yet see, to this: the party organisation is substituted for the party, the Central Committee is substituted for the party organisation, and finally the 'dictator' is substituted for the Central Committee.'[40] The principle of democratic centralism, as laid down by Lenin and practised by the Bolshevik Party, i.e. 'democracy' imposed from the top, pointed unmistakably towards dictatorship, whether oligarchic or autocratic in form. And though Lenin favoured decision making by majority vote in the Central Committee, he was prepared to go against that majority if it flouted his will, as during the *Vikzhel* crisis of early November 1917, when he threatened to 'go to the sailors' of Kronstadt for armed support.[41] Here was the kernel of future autocracy. Indeed, at an early stage of the Bolshevik régime, in April 1918, Lenin spoke up for the very real administrative advantages of one-man dictatorship: 'In the history of revolutions the dictatorship of single individuals has often been the expression, the personification so to speak, of the dictatorship of revolutionary classes. ... Therefore there is decidedly no inconsistency in principle between Soviet (i.e. socialist) democracy and the assumption of dictatorial power by individual persons.'[42]

Two years later, in March 1920, Lenin reiterated his advocacy of personal dictatorship: 'Soviet socialist democracy is not in the least incompatible with individual rule and dictatorship. The will of a class

may sometimes be carried out by a dictator who can sometimes do more all by himself and who is frequently more essential.'[43]

A voluntarist predisposition disguised as historical determinism, an oligarchic party system equipped with a powerful political police accountable in practice solely to the Politburo, and an unshakable belief in the continued need for rule by political terror—such was the lethal legacy bequeathed by Lenin to his successors. Neither Party nor police were bound by any external law or ethic, their conduct being dictated by Central Committee (or, increasingly, Politburo) fiat. In the hands of a power-addicted, paranoiac despot of Stalin's dimensions, such limitless licence was put to devastating effect. Dictators require obedient instruments of coercion; the state security organs founded by Lenin served that need.

The heir to the traditions of Lenin's political police is today's Committee of State Security (KGB),[44] whose personnel proudly call themselves *Chekisty*. The security organs of the years of Stalin's terror under Yagoda, Yezhov, and Beria are discreetly forgotten, and the KGB harks back instead to the idealised service under Dzerzhinsky,[45] when the political police was still the Party's servant. The post-Stalin régime has engaged in a systematic white-washing operation, designed to present the Cheka as a model organisation guided by the Leninist principle of revolutionary legality, all its undertakings 'founded on the strict observance of the law' and inspired by 'the genuinely humanitarian spirit of socialism, equated with the defence of freedom of the individual'.[46] There exists today a veritable cult of the Vecheka; a considerable volume of adulatory literature has been devoted to it over the past two decades,[47] and the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation was celebrated with a fanfare of publicity. The practical object of the exercise is to rehabilitate the political police, tainted as it is with Stalin's terror, by tracing its descent from the immaculate Lenin and the transfigured Cheka. The point is made in the introduction to the volume of documents entitled *Lenin and the Vecheka*, published in 1975, edited under the chairmanship of S. K. Tsvigun, First Deputy Chairman of the KGB:[48] 'Evolved under the direct influence of V. I. Lenin, the basic principles of the Soviet organs of state security, as well as the glorious Chekist traditions, having passed the test of over half a century, have not lost their application even at the present time.'[49]

The mantle of the Vecheka confers prestige and Leninist legitimacy upon the KGB; the line of continuity between the two institutions is exemplified by the KGB's continued use, as its headquarters, of the same Lubianka building (once Bolshaia

Lubianka 2, now Ulitsa Dzerzhinskogo 2)[50] in which Felix Dzerzhinsky presided over the Vecheka.

The Soviet state, based from the start not on a freely expressed democratic choice but on authoritarian rule, depends today on the KGB as crucially as it once did on the Vecheka. The KGB is the Party's obedient instrument, just as the Vecheka was in Lenin's day, and the Party is determined that the political police should never again threaten its predominance, as it did to devastating effect under Stalin. Whilst operating under full Party control, the KGB has grown in political status, having, since the early 1960s, steadily increased its representation in the Party's Central Committee, on Party bureaux in the Republics,[51] and on the Supreme Soviet.[52] A measure of its importance is that throughout his fifteen-year service (1967–May 1982) as KGB Chairman, Yuri Andropov sat on the Politburo, with full membership from 1973, succeeding Brezhnev in November 1982 in the supreme Party office of Secretary General. The present KGB Chairman, Viktor Chebrikov, is likewise a full Politburo member.

Though the KGB is probably more politically influential and, in terms of efficiency, resources, and personnel, is an even more formidable organisation than ever was the Cheka, it has, during its existence since 1954, performed its tasks with infinitely more restraint that did its predecessors. This may appear reassuring. But in certain essentials the USSR remains the same oligarchic police state that was Lenin's original creation, ruled by a self-perpetuating caste claiming a monopoly of wisdom, believing that the end justifies any means for its attainment, exercising censorship and strict political supervision over the population, persecuting dissenters, and seemingly aspiring to eventual world hegemony under the terms of Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

It was Lenin's single-party Communist regime which, relying on terror and the political police, set the pattern for the emerging twentieth-century totalitarian police state; Lenin pointed the way, and the Cheka, which was conceived, served its grim apprenticeship, and came to maturity under his aegis, represented an altogether novel type of fanatical inquisition, set at the service of the first of a new breed of secular religions,[53] whose striking characteristic was intolerance, and whose driving ideal was to create a utopia, the inhabitants of which would be conducted to a condition of happiness, if need be by compulsion.

Notes

PROLOGUE

[1] *Vserossiiskaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiia po borbe s kontrrevoliutsiei i sabotazhem.* This was the original title; for subsequent variants see Chapter II.

[2] The terms *Vecheka* and *Cheka* can both be used to denote the overall organisation; more precisely *Cheka* signifies a subordinate commission of the central *Vecheka.*

[3] *Iz istorii Vserossiiskoi Chrezvychainoi komissii, 1917–1921 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov*, G. A. Belov *et al.* (editors), Moscow, 1958, pp. 78–9 (hereafter—Belov).

[4] Lenin, fifth edition (hereafter—Lenin (5)), Vol. XXX, pp. 327–8.

[5] *Rossiiskaia Sotsial-Demokraticheskaia Rabochaia Partiia*, founded in 1898.

[6] Schapiro, 1970, p. 73, note 4.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[9] Chamberlin, Vol. I, pp. 73–4.

[10] Schapiro, 1970, p. 162.

[11] Chamberlin, Vol. I, pp. 73–5.

[12] The Security Section's full title was: *otdelenie po okhraneniiu obshchestvennoi bezopastnosti i poriadka*, i.e. section for safeguarding public security and order—see *Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, first edition (hereafter *BSE* (1)), Vol. XLIII, cols. 705–6.

[13] Martinov (Martynov), p. 74.

[14] *BSE* (3), Vol. IX, p. 120.

[15] *Padenie tsarskogo rezhima*, Vol. I, 1924, pp. 420–1. See also Tennant, *passim*, and organisational chart at Appendix.

[16] Agafonov, *passim.*

[17] With the striking exception of the Menshevik Party, relatively immune to agent-penetration—see Schapiro, 1970, p. 138.

[18] Wolfe, 1966, p. 601; Possony, pp. 142, 165; Schapiro, 1970, p. 122.

[19] Wolfe, 1966, pp. 607–9.

[20] Possony, pp. 142, 165; Schapiro, 1970, pp. 122, 125, 137. Conciliators were advocates of Bolshevik-Menshevik reunification.

[21] Wolfe, 1966, p. 535.

[22] Possony, p. 142. For further references to some of the many other Okhrana agents riddling the Bolshevik Party, see: *ibid.*, pp. 91, 120, 124, 142, 150, 155; Wolfe, 1966, see Index, pp. 725–6, under Police, Secret; Agafonov, *passim*, especially Supplement II.

[23] Tsiavlovskii, M. A. (editor), *Bolsheviki; dokumenty po istorii bolshevizma s 1903 po 1916 god byvsh. moskovskogo okhrannogo otdeleniia,* Moscow, 1918.

[24] Shub, p. 182.

[25] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 74.

[26] The situation was penetratingly reported in despatches sent by Sir Samuel Hoare, M.P., chief of the British Intelligence Mission engaged on General Staff liaison duties in Petrograd—see Hoare, pp. 108–30.

[27] Browder and Kerensky, Vol. I, p. 135.

[28] Chamberlin, Vol. I, pp. 77, 85.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

[30] Browder and Kerensky, Vol. I, p. 216, quoting *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Pravitelstva* (hereafter *S.U.R.P.*), No. I, 1: 453, 10 Mar. 1917.

[31] Browder and Kerensky, Vol. I, p. 217, quoting an ordinance of 19 Mar. 1917.

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 218–19, quoting *S.U.R.P.* 1917, No. I, 1: 537, 17 Apr. 1917.

[33] Schapiro, 1970, pp. 46, 83.

[34] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 49.
[35] Nove, pp. 66–7, citing *Sovetskoe narodnoe khoziaistvo 1921–5*, I. Gladkov (editor), Moscow, 1960, p. 531. Russia's industrial proletariat would sink to a mere 1.2 million in 1920, as a result of the Civil War and famine.
[36] Baedeker, 1914, p. xxxiii, footnote.
[37] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXI, pp. 91–3. Cf. Vol XLIV, p. 36, speech at Third Comintern Congress, 5 July 1921.
[38] Schapiro, 1970, pp. 46–7.
[39] Lenin (5), Vol. X, p. 20; Schapiro, 1970, pp. 79–80.
[40] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXI, p. 133.
[41] Schapiro, 1970, p. 147.
[42] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXI, p. 21.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[44] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIII, p. 9–10, 90.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 42–3, 90–1.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[48] Schapiro, 1970, p. 47.
[49] Lenin, (5) Vol. XXXI, pp. 39–40.
[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 40–1.
[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 41–2.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 42–4.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 115.
[54] i.e. Lenin (5), Vol. XXXI, pp. 138, 146, 162, 164–5, 198; Vol. XXXII, pp. 46–7, 166.
[55] *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii rabochego i krestianskogo pravitelstva (R.S.F.S.R.)* (hereafter *S.U.R.*), 1918, No. 17: 245, 15 Jan. 1918, published 20 Jan. 1918.
[56] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXII, p. 267.
[57] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 121.
[58] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 26.
[59] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 321.
[60] Gorky, p. 127, article in *Novaia zhizn*, 11(24) Jan. 1918.
[61] Footman, 1968, p. 87. Andrei Ivanovich Zheliabov, a *Narodnaia Volia* revolutionary, was executed in 1881 for participation in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II.
[62] Lenin (5), Vol. XLV, p. 381, dictated on 17 Jan. 1923.
[63] Lenin (3), Vol. IV, pp. 108–9.
[64] *Narodnaia Volia*—called, prior to 1879, *Zemlia i Volia* (Land and Liberty).
[65] Nikolaevskii, 1932, pp. 55, 96.
[66] Schapiro, 1970, p. 45.
[67] Lenin (3), Vol. IV, pp. 108–9.
[68] Wolfe, 'Leninism' in Drachkovitch, 1965, pp. 70–3, citing copious Lenin references. Wolfe sums up: 'Here is the pedantry, systematization, and "scientific organization" of terror'—see p. 73.
[69] Lenin (5), Vol. XI, p. 342.
[70] Schapiro, 1970, pp. 106–9.
[71] See Schapiro, 1967, pp. 137–41; Mitskevich, 'Russkie Iakobintsy' in *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, 1923, No. 6–7 (18–19), pp. 3–26; Fishman, pp. 127–31, 134–7, 154–68.
[72] Wolfe, 'Leninism' in Drachkovitch, 1965, pp. 54–62.
[73] McLellan, p. 65.
[74] Lenin (5), Vol. X, p. 138; *ibid.*, Vol. XI, p. 47.
[75] Shub, p. 16, citing L. Ilyinski, *Semeistvo Ulyanovykh. K godovshchine smerti N. I. Lenina—Sbornik*, Leningrad, 1925, pp. 78, 82–3.
[76] Trotsky, 1972, p. 159.
[77] For 'liberal society's' rejection of the Ulianov family, see Wolfe, 1966, pp. 80–2.

CHAPTER I

[1] *(Petrogradskii) Voenno-revoliutsionnyi komitet.*

[2] For instance Peters, 1924, p. 6.

[3] See Belov, p. vi. This collection of documents on the history of the Vecheka devotes almost all of the first 67—out of a total of 349—documents to the MRC's role in combating counter-revolution.

[4] F. E. Dzerzhinsky, 1877–1926. (Feliks Edmundovich Dzerzhinskii, in the Library of Congress transliteration; the native Polish spelling is Feliks Dzierżyński.)

[5] *BSE* (1), Vol. XI, col. 531.

[6] Chamberlin, Vol. I, pp. 277–9.

[7] Deutscher, 1954, p. 286.

[8] *Protokoly Ts.K. 1917–1918*, pp. 83–6.

[9] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 299. Cf. Belov, p. 3, footnote.

[10] *Petrogradskii Voenno-revoliutsionnyi komitet: Dokumenty i materialy*, D. A. Chugaev *et al.* (editors), Moscow, 1966–7, Vol. I, p. 6 (hereafter—Chugaev).

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[12] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 300.

[13] *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 8–9.

[14] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 300. The controlling bureau of the MRC consisted of three Bolsheviks and two LSRs—see Chugaev, Vol. I, p. 8.

[15] *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, p. 266.

[16] Trotsky, 1969, Vol. I, p. 343.

[17] *Doneseniia Komissarov*, p. 9.

[18] Chugaev, Vol. I, p. 9. By 10 November, 341 commissars had been appointed by the MRC to military units, civilian establishments, and in the provinces.

[19] *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 284. For Martyn Ianovich Latsis (alias of Ian Fridrikhovich Sudrabs), 1888–1938, see biographical sketch in Chapter XII.

[20] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 236.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 307, citing 'the most reliable sources', i.e. Trotsky and Antonov-Ovseenko.

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 307, 465–7.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 313–14, 318–19.

[25] Lenin (4), Vol. XXVI, p. 207.

[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVII, p. 76.

[27] Daniels, 1968, pp. 176, 240–1.

[28] In his tract 'Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?', written in late September 1917, Lenin remarked: 'Yet we are told that the 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party will not be able to govern Russia.'—Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIV, p. 313.

[29] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 341.

[30] *Komitet Spaseniia Rodiny i Revoliutsii*—see Khatskevich, 1965, p. 190.

[31] F. I. Dan—pseudonym of Fedor Ilich Gurvich (1871–1947), physician; joined RSDRP in 1894, Menshevik since 1903; married to sister of Martov, with whom he shared leadership of Menshevik Party; after February Revolution, member of Petrograd Soviet's Executive Committee and Presidium member of All-Russian Central Executive Committee of First Congress of Soviets; 1922 expelled from Russia, died in New York—see *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 116; Lunacharsky, p. 55.

[32] Abram Rafailovich Gotz (1882–1940), after February Revolution led Socialist Revolutionary faction in Petrograd Soviet; deputy chairman of All-Russian Central Executive Committee of First Congress of Soviets; 1920 arrested on charges of complicity in acts of terrorism against Soviet leaders; 1922 sentenced to death but sentence commuted; died in imprisonment—see *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 209.

[33] Reed, pp. 106–7.

[34] Chamberlin, Vol. I, pp. 322–4. See also Iroshnikov, pp. 159–61, for detail of the organisation of civil disobedience.

[35] Schapiro, 1955, p. 74, and footnote 14.

[36] Lev Borisovich Kamenev (alias of Rosenfeld), 1883–1936.

[37] Grigorii Zinoviev (alias of Radomyslskii), 1883–1936.

[38] *Protokoly zasedanii VTsIK II*, p. 27.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 27.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[41] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 1: 1, published on 28 Oct. 1917 in *Gazeta Vremennago Rabochago i Krestianskago Pravitelstva* (Gazette of the Provisional Government of Workers and Peasants—hereafter *Gazeta VRiKP*), No. 1. Officially, Soviet decrees became valid on date of publication, not of enactment—see *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 1: 12, paragraph 4. Decrees were initially published in the government gazette, as above, and, as from 15 Mar. 1918, in *Izvestiia VTsIK Sovetov* (hereafter *Izvestiia*). At first the Sovnarkom modestly styled itself 'The Provisional Government of Workers and Peasants', but the qualifying adjective 'Provisional' was discarded after the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly.

[42] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 1: 12.

[43] *BSE* (1), Vol. XIII, cols. 649–50. In practice, the Bolsheviks rejected the interpretation that VTsIK was a legislative, the Sovnarkom an executive, instrument, signifying a separation of powers. As Sverdlov put it at a VTsIK meeting on 1 Apr. 1918: 'The Council of People's Commissars is in itself a direct organ of power; it is both legislative and executive and administrative'—see Iroshnikov, p. 113, citing Ia. M. Sverdlov, *Izbrannye Proizvedeniia*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1959, p. 161.

[44] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 323.

[45] *Protokoly zasedanii VTsIK II*, p. 10.

[46] Gorodetskii, p. 113.

[47] Chugaev, Vol. I, p. 10.

[48] See *ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 663, *note*, listing a number of MRC departments, and naming directing personnel.

[49] Belov, p. vi.

[50] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 12: 180.

[51] Belov, p. 58, citing *TsGAOR, fond 1236*.

[52] *Voenno-sledstvennaia komissiia*. Confusingly, various other titles have, at one time or another, been attributed to the Military Investigation Commission, e.g.: 'investigation commission for combating counter-revolution' (see *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 225—Krasikov biography); 'investigation commission for combating counter-revolution and speculation' (*BSE* (1), Vol. XXXIV, cols. 557–8; *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. I, p. 588); 'extraordinary investigation commission' (Lenin (5), Vol. XLIX, p. 640).

[53] *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. I, p. 547; Gindin, 1968, p. 202; Chugaev, Vol. I, p. 11.

[54] *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. I, p. 547; cf. Gindin, 1968, pp. 203–4. For *Russkoe Sobranie*, see also Chapter XIII.

[55] Chugaev, Vol. II, p. 60.

[56] *Ibid.* Mechislav Iu. Kozlovskii (Polish spelling—Mieczysław Kozłowski), 1876–1927.

[57] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 583. Kozlovskii signed as Commission chairman on 16 Nov. 1917—see Chugaev, Vol. III, p. 88.

[58] Petr Ananevich Krasikov, 1870–1939. His biographer implies, unconvincingly, that Krasikov was the Commission's first chairman—see Gindin, 1968, p. 202.

[59] Chugaev, Vol. II, p. 433.

[60] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 11.

[61] Belov, p. 89, footnote.

[62] Chugaev, Vol. I, p. 10.

[63] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 1: 4, published 28 Oct. 1917.

[64] *Protokoly zasedanii VTsIK II*, pp. 24–7.

[65] Reed, p. 271.

[66] *Dokumenty VPR*, Vol. I, pp. 211, 220.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 248.

[68] *Kontrolnaia komissiia pri VRK nad pechatiu.*
[69] Chugaev, Vol. III, p. 166.
[70] Gorodetskii, pp. 134–5.
[71] Daniels, 1968, p. 42.
[72] Zubov, 1971, p. 163.
[73] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 141. However Malkov, 1959, p. 7, and Lenin (5), Vol. L, pp. 843–4, both give the date of handover as 29 October.
[74] Drabkina, p. 389; Zubov, 1971, p. 176.
[75] Chugaev, Vol. I, p. 485.
[76] Shub, pp. 346–7.
[77] Iroshnikov, p. 73.
[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 73–4, citing Ia. Kaimin, *Latyshskie strelki v borbe za pobedu Oktiabrskoi revoliutsii.*, Riga, 1961, pp. 365–80.
[79] *BSE* (3), Vol. XIV, pp. 216–17.
[80] Iakov Khristoforovich Peters, 1886–1938 (or –1942), see biographical sketch in Chapter XII.
[81] Moisei Solomonovich Uritskii, 1873–1918, see biographical sketch in Chapter XII.
[82] Nikolai Alekseevich Skrypnik, 1872–1933, see App. B.
[83] Chugaev, Vol. III, pp. 254–5. The commission was styled: *Komissiia po proverke mandatov sluzhashchikh Smolnogo.*
[84] Varlaam Aleksandrovich Avanesov (alias Suren Martirosian or Martirosov), 1884–1930, see App. B.
[85] Zubov, 1965, pp. 156–7.
[86] *Komissiia po reorganizatsii okhrany Petrograda.*
[87] Belov, p. 62, citing *TsGAOR, fond 1236.*
[88] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 205, citing *TsGAOR, fond 130.* For Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov, 1881–1969, see App. B.
[89] Latsis, 1926, p. 82. For Vasilii Kuzmich Averin, 1885–1945, see *Who Was Who in the USSR*, pp. 36–7.
[90] Bonch-Bruevich, 1930, p. 197. For locaction of *Gradonachalstvo* at Gorokhovaia 2, see Baedeker, p. 93.
[91] *Komissiia po borbe s kontrrevoliutsiei i sabotazhem pri VTsIK*—see Chugaev, Vol. III, pp. 232, 715.
[92] e.g. in Belov, p. 62; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 34, *note* 2.
[93] Belov, p. 62, citing *TsGAOR, fond 1236*; Chugaev, Vol. III, p. 232. For Georgii Ivanovich Blagonravov, 1895–1937 (or –1938), see App. B. For Valentin Andreevich Trifonov, 1888–1938, see *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 488–90; for Ivan Petrovich Flerovskii, 1888–1959, see *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 532–3. A. V. Galkin is listed as an MRC member in Chugaev, Vol. III, p. 663.
[94] Chugaev, Vol. III, pp. 257, 259.
[95] Sofinov, p. 17; Zubov, 1971, p. 175.
[96] Zubov, 1971, p. 175.
[97] Bonch-Bruevich, 1930, p. 197.
[98] *Dokumenty VPR*, Vol. I, p. 61.
[99] *Osobaia razvedka.*
[100] *Dokumenty VPR*, Vol. I, pp. 86–7.
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 227.
[102] Khatskevich, 1961, pp. 188–9.
[103] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 358.
[104] Bonch-Bruevich, 1930, p. 191.
[105] For Vladimir Dmitrievich Bonch-Bruevich, 1873–1955, see *BSE* (2), Vol. V (1950), p. 563; Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, p. 766.
[106] Proclamation reproduced in Williams, facing p. 164.
[107] Bonch-Bruevich, 1930, p. 191, describes the scene vividly, but seemingly dates it as the night of 4/5 December.
[108] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

[109] *Ibid.*, p. 194.
[110] *Ibid.*, pp. 195–6.
[111] *Ibid.*, p. 332.
[112] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, p. 91.
[113] *BSE* (3), Vol. III, p. 558. Bonch-Bruevich was confirmed in this appointment on 1 Nov. 1917—see *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 581.
[114] Gorodetskii, pp. 139–40.
[115] Iakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov, 1885 to 16 Mar. 1919.
[116] Grigorii Ivanovich Petrovskii, 1878–1958, Commissar for Internal Affairs until mid-March 1919.
[117] Iroshnikov, p. 212. For Iosif Stanislavovich Unshlikht (Polish spelling—Józef Unszlicht; German spelling—Unschlicht), 1879–1938, see biographical sketch in Chapter XII, pp. 271–3.
[118] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 583. According to Latsis, in mid-November Lenin offered him the chairmanship of the NKVD Commissariat, which he modestly declined, pleading insufficient experience, whereupon Petrovskii was appointed—see Latsis, 1925, No. 2 (37), p. 139.
[119] Latsis, 1925, No. 2 (37), p. 148.
[120] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 80: 842, 28 Oct. 1918, *Izvestiia*, 2 Nov. 1918. (Text in Belov, pp. 203–4.)
[121] Latsis, 1925, No. 2 (37), pp. 138–48. M. K. Muranov was relieved of his appointment 'for personal reasons' on 8 Dec. 1917—see *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 586.
[122] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 1: 15. Belov, p. vi, affirms that Lenin personally proposed this decree.
[123] Gorodetskii, pp. 307–8; *Dokumenty VPR*, Vol. I, pp. 270–1; Chugaev, Vol. III, p. 169; *Bolshevistskie VRK*, p. 200.
[124] Zubov, 1971, p. 177; Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 195–6; Golinkov, 1971, pp. 53–7. See also Chapter XIII.
[125] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 4: 64; *Gazeta VRiKP*, 30 Nov. 1917 (text in Belov, pp. 66–8).
[126] Belov, p. 66, citing Lenin (4), Vol. XXVI, p. 315.
[127] Steinberg, 1929, p. 52. Isaak Zakharovich Steinberg (Shteinberg), People's Commissar for Justice in Bolshevik-LSR coalition government, 12 Dec. 1917–16 Mar. 1918—see Rigby, p. 240.
[128] Latsis, 1926, pp. 83–4.
[129] Belov, p. 23, citing *TsGAOR, fond 1.*
[130] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[131] *Dokumenty VPR*, Vol. II, pp. 284–5.
[132] Belov, pp. 54-5, quoting *Izvestiia*, 11 Nov. 1917.
[133] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 3: 33, *Izvestiia*, 12 Nov. 1917.
[134] Belov, p. 57, quoting *Izvestiia*, 12 Nov. 1917.
[135] For a useful survey of the strike, richly documented from archival sources, see Iroshnikov, pp. 152–71.
[136] Belov, p. 252.
[137] *Ibid.*, pp. 36–7, quoting *Izvestiia*, 7 Nov. 1917.
[138] *Dokumenty VPR*, Vol. II, p. 253.
[139] Gorodetskii, pp. 136–8.
[140] Belov, pp. 65–6, quoting *Izvestiia*, 26 Nov. 1917.
[141] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 198. See also beginning of Chapter XIII.
[142] *Ibid.*, p. 209, citing *TsGAOR, fond 130.*
[143] Belov, pp. 71–2, citing *TsGAOR, fond 1236.*
[144] Fedor P. Drugov, member of Petrograd MRC (see Chugaev, Vol. III, pp. 258, 456, 509), served in the Vecheka (see Golinkov, 1965, p. 122), apparently in its Collegium, up to June 1918, despite being an Anarchist—see F. P. Drugov, 'S Dzerzhinskim v VChK (ispoved raskaiavshagosia Chekista)' in *Illiustrirovannaia Rossiia*, 1931, No. 6, pp. 1, 4.

[145] Dmitrii Gavrilovich Evseev, 1892–1942, see App. B.

[146] Ivan Ilich Ilin, 1889– , LSR, 8 Dec. 1917, joined Vecheka Collegium; 1925 joined Communist Party; as at 1968 state pensioner (see (i) *Osoboe zadanie*, pp. 320/1, featuring photograph, (ii) Bibliography, citing Ilin's article).

[147] Karl Andreevich Peterson, 1877–1926, Latvian (see *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 236–8; Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIX, p. 569).

[148] Sergei Petrovich Prokhorov, 1894–1942 (see *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 292–3).

[149] Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 144.

[150] Chugaev, Vol. III, p. 232.

[151] i.e. (i) only one source, albeit the most authoritative one (Chugaev, Vol. III, pp. 232, 715), describes the commission formed on 21 November as being attached to VTsIK—it is generally taken to be an MRC commission; (ii) as late as 1 December VTsIK had on its agenda (though there is no evidence of any further action or discussion by VTsIK on this point) '[the reorganisation of the MRC and] the organisation of a department for combating counter-revolution' (see *Protokoly VTsIK II*, p. 119)—which might indicate that no such VTsIK department had yet been formed. VTsIK had previously decided, on 2 November, to form twelve departments, including one for 'combating counter-revolution' (see *Protokoly VTsIK II*, pp. 19–20), but the latter did not figure among fourteen recently formed VTsIK departments in existence by 6 November (p. 34).

[152] On 5 December, the Bolsheviks intercepted a telegram from the *Malyi Sovet*, urging all state employees to go on strike—see *Lenin i VChK*, p. 34, *note* 1.

[153] Belov, p. 72, quoting from Sovnarkom minutes.

[154] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, pp. 156–8, first published in *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, No. 5, pp. xiv–xv, Moscow, 1924. This draft decree—which contained the phrase 'As a first step towards introduction of universal labour service'—adumbrated a concept of Lenin's which later germinated into measures for labour conscription, applied as part of War Communism discipline. Meanwhile, in mid-December 1917, Lenin prepared another, analogous, decree draft—see Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, p. 429. Neither decree was enacted.

[155] *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, p. 67.

[156] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 212, citing *TsGAOR, fond 130.*

[157] Bonch-Bruevich, 1930, p. 199.

[158] Question marks as in the original text. For Ivan Ksenofontovich Ksenofontov, 1884–1926, see App. B. Zhedilev is an error for (N.A.) Zhidelev. Petersen should be Peterson. Sergo: pseudonym of G. K. Ordzhonikidze, 1886–1937.

[159] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 36–7, following the original text of the Sovnarkom minutes. This authoritative version (the *Lenin i VChK* collection of documents was published in 1975 by Politizdat, with S. K. Tsvigun, First Deputy Chairman of the KGB, as principal editor), superseding the much earlier Belov (1958, Politizdat, pp. 78–9) version, significantly presents virtually the entire content of the Sovnarkom minute as an integral part of Dzerzhinsky's report/proposal, and limits the Sovnarkom's role to approving the proposal and deciding the new commission's title and its affiliation to the Sovnarkom. Khatskevich (1965, p. 213) goes even further, attributing to Dzerzhinsky even the choice of title and the proposal regarding the commission's direct subordination to the Sovnarkom.

So far as can be ascertained, the text of the Sovnarkom resolution was first published (with minor divergences) in an *Izvestiia* (10 Feb. 1922) article by Latsis, next in Peters, 1924, pp. 5–6, in Latsis, 1926, pp. 82–3, and in *Pravda*, 18 Dec. 1927. A paraphrased and summarised version had appeared in Latsis, 1921, pp. 7–8, and earlier still, in a Latsis account of the Chekas, issued in 1919 for internal Cheka circulation—see *Struggling Russia*, New York, 21 Feb. 1920, p. 771; see also Latsis, 1921, p. 5.

[160] In tenth anniversary articles on the Vecheka in *Izvestiia*, 18 Dec. 1927, the historian M. Pokrovskii and the Chekist T. Samsonov stated that the Vecheka was founded by Sovnarkom decree in December 1917; however, in a simultaneous article in

Pravda, 18 Dec. 1927, Pokrovskii admitted that it was 'not a decree but an extract from the minutes'. For Timofei Petrovich Samsonov. 1888–1955, see App. B.

[161] *Izvestiia*, 10 Feb. 1922.

[162] *BSE* (1), Vol. XIII, 1929, col. 660; *BSE* (2), Vol. IX, 1951, p. 323. Nevertheless *Iuridicheskii Slovar*, Vol. II, 2nd edition, Moscow, 1956, p. 321, still described the Vecheka as founded by Sovnarkom decree of 7(20) Dec. 1917.

[163] *Pravda*, 31 I 1919. For Grigorii Semenovich Moroz, 1893–1940, see App. B.

[164] Krylenko, 1924, p. 100.

[165] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 9: 145, published 17 Dec. 1917.

[166] *Narodnyi Komissariat Iustitsii.*

[167] Lenin (2), Vol. XXII, *note* on p. 593.

[168] A photograph of part of Dzerzhinsky's manuscript is in Zubov, 1965, facing p. 144; the incomplete text of the draft is printed on p. 161. That this draft was prepared for the Sovnarkom meeting on 7 December 1917 is indicated by its position as Document No. 1 (preceding the minutes of that Sovnarkom meeting, which figure as Document No. 2) in *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, 1973, p. 67.

[169] However, Latsis, 1926, p. 82, said of the minutes recording the Sovnarkom's resolution of 7(20) December 1917 that, 'as is evident from the note, they were written in haste by Vladimir Ilich himself'. (The note referred to was presumably Lenin's note of that day to Dzerzhinsky.) That Latsis's assumption was unwarranted is conclusively established by the exclusion of the Sovnarkom resolution from all editions of Lenin's works.

[170] e.g.: *BSE* (2), Vol. IX, 1951, p. 323; Sofinov, p. 18; Belov, p. vii.

[171] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 213. Cf. paragraph 1 of footnote in Belov, p. 78.

[172] Latsis, 1926, pp. 81–2.

[173] Nevertheless, several commissions, whose security functions impinged on the Vecheka's domain, escaped Dzerzhinsky's grasp at this stage: e.g. Bonch-Bruevich's Committee for Combating Pogroms, subordinated to VTsIK.

[174] Dzerzhinsky's speech on 17 Feb. 1919 to VTsIK—see Belov, p. 251.

[175] See Chugaev, Vol. III, pp. 663–4.

[176] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 213.

[177] Latsis, 1926, p. 82.

[178] Peters, 1924, p. 6; Ilin, p. 49.

[179] Latsis, 1926, p. 94.

[180] Gorodetskii, p. 289.

[181] *Protokoly zasedanii VTsIK II*, p. 35. On 8 Nov. 1917, Sverdlov replaced Kamenev as Chairman of VTsIK, retaining the post—equivalent to head of state—until his death on 16 Mar. 1919. The future Chekist, Avanesov, was to remain Secretary of VTsIK for several years, and even longer a candidate member of the VTsIK Presidium—see App. B.

[182] Bukharin, 1931, p. 141.

[183] Petrovskii, p. 24.

[184] Bonch-Bruevich, 1930, p. 197. During the French Revolution Fouquier Tinville, in the capacity of public prosecutor to Robespierre's Revolutionary Tribunal, sent thousands to the guillotine—on which he himself finally perished.

[185] Menzhinsky, in *Pravda*, 20 July 1927. At gymnasium Dzerzhinsky had to repeat his first year class because of his inadequate Russian—see Khatskevich, 1965, p. 9.

[186] Dzerzhinsky's family belonged to the Polish *drobna szlachta*, i.e. landed gentry or lesser aristocracy—see *Księga Polaków*, pp. 210–11. In Russia, Dzerzhinsky, like Lenin, was classed as *dvorianin*, a member of the minor nobility (see the 'wanted' circular, issued on 12 July 1902 by the Podole provincial governor, available in the Hoover Institution archives, B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection). Dzerzhinsky's father, like Lenin's, belonged to the intelligentsia, both being university graduates (in mathematics and physics) and gymnasium teachers (see Khatskevich, 1965, p. 5; Ulam, p. 4), though Lenin's rose higher in the educational hierarchy.

[187] In Polish—Wilno, in Lithuanian—Vilnius.

[188] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 17; Tomash, p. 91.

[189] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 121–2; see also chronology on pp. 40–3 of *Vospominaniia o Dzerzhinskom*, 1962.

[190] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 24, 30, 39, 43, 90.

[191] *Vospominaniia o Dzerzhinskom*, pp. 41–3.

[192] *Księga Polaków*, p. 211; Lenin (5), Vol. XXXI, p. 600.

[193] Slusser, 1973, *Chekist leaders from Dzerzhinsky to Yezhov, note* 6, cites a questionnaire, completed by Dzerzhinsky as a delegate to the Twelfth Party Congress in 1923, in which he stated his date of joining the Bolshevik Party as 1906—see *Dvenadtsatyi sezd RKP(b), 17–25 aprelia 1923 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet.* (Moscow, 1968), p. 748.

[194] Ochmański, 1969, pp. 23 ff.

[195] *Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy.*

[196] Strobel, 1968, pp. 38–41; Strobel, 1974, pp. 130–1.

[197] Strobel, 1968, pp. 28–41.

[198] Mitskevich-Kapsukas, p. 55.

[199] *Protokoly, VII konferentsiia RSDRP(b),* pp. 201–4. For comment on this episode, see Dziewanowski, pp. 65–6.

[200] Lenin (5), Vol. XLV, pp. 356–8.

[201] Nettl, Vol. I, p. 33.

[202] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[203] Julius Martov (pseudonym of Iulii Osipovich Tsederbaum), 1873–1923, Menshevik leader, emigrated to Germany in autumn 1920, a sick man; on 1 Feb. 1921 launched the Menshevik periodical, *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, in Berlin. See biography by Israel Getzler.

[204] Strobel, 1974, pp. 128–9.

[205] Abramovich, 1947, p. 55; Kirzhnits, p. 72 and *note* 28.

[206] Mikhail Isaakovich Goldman, alias Mark Liber, 1878–1937, became member of Central Committee of the Bund; executed by NKVD in Alma Ata—see Abramovich, 1947, pp. 55–6.

[207] There are references to Dzerzhinsky being Liber's brother-in-law in Aronson (1956, Vol. I, p. 222) and elsewhere—see Strobel, 1974, p. 128, *note* 24. Regarding this love affair, see Ochmański, 1969, p. 52, and Ochmański, 1977, pp. 97–100.

[208] Ochmański, 1977, p. 103. Sabina's brother was Władysław Feinstein, alias Zdzisław Leder.

[209] Dzerzhinskaia, 1965, pp. 7, 21, 26. Her name in Polish was Zofia née Muszkat (4 Dec. 1882–27 Feb. 1968). For their marriage on 10 Nov. 1910 (Tsvigun, p. 105, wrongly dates this as August 1910) in Kraków, and birth of a son, Jan, on 23 June 1911 in the women's prison 'Serbia' in Warsaw, see Ochmański, 1977, p. 105.

[210] Dzerzhinsky's Soviet biographers make no mention of his attachments to Julia Goldman and Sabina Feinstein, or of his close personal links with Bundists and Mensheviks.

[211] *Księga Polaków*, pp. 210–11.

[212] Nettl, Vol. II, pp. 583–4.

[213] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 127–65. For Dzerzhinsky's election, together with Sverdlov, Stasova, and two others, to the Central Committee's Secretariat, see *Protokoly Ts.K., 1917–1918*, p. 214.

[214] *Protokoly Ts.K., 1917–1918*, p. 6.

[215] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[216] Trotsky, 1934, p. 1005.

[217] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIV, p. 395.

[218] Chugaev, Vol. I, pp. 7, 50.

[219] As for instance Belov, p. 3, footnote.

[220] Trotsky, 1934, pp. 1210–12.

[221] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 178–81.

[222] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 478.

[223] Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 150.

[224] S. Dzerzhinskaia, 'Pamiati Feliksa Dzerzhinskogo', *Novyi mir*, Jan 1938, p. 219. This article was probably written to order, in aid of Stalin's purges.

[225] *Chekisty*, pp. 7–8; Blobaum, p. 209.

[226] Blobaum, pp. 209–11, 213, 220.

CHAPTER II

[1] Latsis, 1921, p. 7; Gorodetskii, p. 289. In all probability the first Vecheka Collegium meeting was in fact identical with the meeting of the hastily improvised special commission, convened by Dzerzhinsky, which worked out the specific recommendations for the formation of the Vecheka which were submitted to, and approved by, the Sovnarkom that same evening (Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 212–13), i.e. it preceded the Sovnarkom's founding resolution. This is implied by Peters (1927, 'Bolshaia Lubianka 2'), as also in the statement by Latsis (1921, p. 7) that it was the first Collegium meeting, on 7(20) December, which decided on the Vecheka's title, i.e. prior to the Sovnarkom's formal approval of it later that day, a point supported by Khatskevich, 1965, p. 213.

[2] Latsis, 1921, p. 7; Latsis, 1926, p. 83; Peters, 1924, p. 6.

[3] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 36–7.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 596; Latsis, 1925, p. 148. For Nikolai Andreevich Zhidelev, 1880–1950, see Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 26, footnote, 682.

[5] Peters, 1931, p. 146.

[6] Peters, 1924, p. 6. For Vasilii Vasilevich Fomin, 1884–1942, see App. B. S. E. Shchukin is mentioned in Gorodetskii, p. 176. Chernov remains unidentified.

[7] *Pogranichnye voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, p. 67, footnote; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 37, footnote. For Viacheslav Rudolfovich Menzhinsky, 1874–1934, see biographical sketch in Chapter XII. Smirnov was probably A. P. Smirnov, who joined the NKVD Collegium on 14(27) Dec. 1917—see Latsis, 1925, p. 148. Iakovlev remains unidentified.

[8] For sparse references to the Vecheka Presidium, see Belov, pp. 247, 345, 360, 365, 374, 444, etc.; also Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 144, etc.

[9] *Izvestiia*, 17 Dec. 1922; Malitskii, p. 11. However, Khatskevich, 1965, p. 215, is careful to name only Dzerzhinsky out of this singular quintet.

[10] Gorodetskii, p. 297, citing *TsPA IML, fond 19*. For Viacheslav Alekseevich Aleksandrovich, alias Petr Alekseevich Dmitrievskii, 1884–1918, see App. B.

[11] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 597; cf. Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, p. 518. For G. D. Zaks, 1882–1937, see App. B. Belov, p. 99, indicates that Evseev may also have been a deputy chairman as at March 1918.

[12] Ilin, p. 49.

[13] Peters, 1924, p. 10.

[14] Peters, 1927, 'Bolshaia Lubianka 2'; Peters, 1927, 'Zashchita Revoliutsii', p. 169.

[15] Dan, pp. 116–25.

[16] Zubov, 1971, p. 183.

[17] Akshinskii, p. 55, citing *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 24 Dec. 1969; Voroshilov, pp. 84–5; *BSE* (3), Vol. V (1971), col. 1101. See, in the unpaginated *Feliks Edmundovich Dzerzhinskii, Albom*, Moscow, 1951, the facsimile of an (undated) identity card made out by Dzerzhinsky to Voroshilov, describing him as a 'representative' of the Vecheka. Cf. Zubov 1971, between pp. 80–1, photograph of Voroshilov's Vecheka identity card.

[18] *Izvestiia*, 10 Dec. 1917, quoted in Belov, p. 84.

[19] Sofinov, p. 20; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 214.

[20] See, in this connection, V. K. Vinogradov, 'Gazeta *Izvestiia VTsIK* kak istochnik po istorii VChK' in *Istoriia SSSR*, No. 6, Nov.–Dec. 1978, pp. 105–10. Disappointingly, this study of Vecheka publicity in *Izvestiia* only covers the period Dec. 1917–Feb. 1919.

[21] *Izvestiia*, 15 Dec. 1917, quoted in Gorodetskii, p. 292. Carr, 'The Origin and

Status of the Cheka', p. 3, states that this *Izvestiia* article gave the Vecheka's address as Gorokhovaia 2, 4th floor.

[22] Peters, 1924, p. 10.

[23] Zubov, 1971, p. 183.

[24] Iroshnikov, p. 215, quoting, from *TsPA IML, fond 461*, Dzerzhinsky's letter of 11 Jan. 1918 to Lenin.

[25] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, p. 7.

[26] Sofinov, p. 20.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 21, citing *TsPA IML, fond 76.*

[28] Gladkov and Smirnov, p. 188.

[29] Zubov, 1971, between pp. 80–1, photograph of Vecheka document dated 31 July 1920.

[30] Belov, p. 349.

[31] Belov, p. 91, citing *TsPA IML, fond 19.*

[32] Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, p. 695, *note* 629.

[33] *Ibid., note* 630.

[34] Iroshnikov, pp. 268–9, citing numerous sources.

[35] Belov, p. 478; Tishkov, p. 26.

[36] Iakovlev, p. 5.

[37] Sofinov, pp. 20–1.

[38] Tishkov, p. 26.

[39] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 5; Sofinov, p. 21.

[40] Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 32–3, naming the seventy-two men.

[41] Tishkov, p. 26.

[42] *Izvestiia*, 15 Dec. 1917, quoted in Gorodetskii, pp. 291–2.

[43] *Izvestiia*, 23 Feb. 1918, quoted in Belov, p. 98.

[44] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 12: 180, published 24 Dec. 1917; the Military Revolutionary Committees were abolished by this edict.

[45] Sofinov, p. 21.

[46] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, p. 116; an editorial footnote there confusingly refers to Bonch-Bruevich's organisation as 'Investigation commission for combating counter-revolution, sabotage and speculation'.

[47] Bonch-Bruevich, 1930, p. 332.

[48] *Ibid.*; *pace* Carr, 1950, p. 160, stating: 'Dzerzhinsky ... as chief security officer, was in charge of the move.'

[49] Sofinov, p. 39, and Alidin *et al.*, p. 4, put the Vecheka's move at 10 March, whilst Belov, p. 478, and *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, p. 19, date it as 12 March.

[50] Sofinov, pp. 38–9. Uritskii's deputy, appointed either now or later, was Gleb Ivanovich Bokii, 1879–1940—see App. B and *Lenin i VChK*, p. 582.

[51] Alidin *et al.*, pp. 4–5, 16–17. However, the less authoritative Sofinov, p. 39, puts the M-Cheka's creation at February 1918.

[52] N. Zakharin, in *Na chuzhoi storone*, III, 1923, p. 1; Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 152.

[53] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 152.

[54] Chernov, pp. 152–3.

[55] 'Khoziaistvennyi Otdel Vserossiiskoi Chrezvychainoi komissii po borbe s kontr-revoliutsiei i spekuliatsiei. Vedenie khoziaistva v Chrezvychainykh Komissiiakh' in *Organizatsiia ChK*, 1918, p. 38.

[56] Kizilov, p. 8.

[57] Peters, 1924, p. 11.

[58] Latsis, 1926, p. 90.

[59] Latsis in *Izvestiia*, 10 Feb. 1922.

[60] Belov, p. 478.

[61] Sofinov, p. 43.

[62] *Izvestiia*, 13 and 16 Apr. 1918. However, *Pravda*, 13 Apr. 1918, claimed 10 to 12 Chekists merely wounded, and some 30 Anarchists killed and wounded.

[63] Lockhart, 1932, pp. 258–9. See also Peters, 1924, pp. 8–9; Sofinov, pp. 42–4; Avrich, 1967, pp. 184–5.
[64] *Izvestiia*, 27 Apr. 1918.
[65] *Ibid.*, 16 Apr. 1918.
[66] Sofinov, p. 39, citing *TsPa IML, fond 76*; cf. Tishkov, pp. 26–7. For further details, see *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 19 Feb. 1966.
[67] Sofinov, p. 39; Tishkov, pp. 26–7.
[68] Tishkov, p. 27.
[69] Belov, pp. 112–13, citing *TsGAOR, fond 1235.*
[70] On 8 Mar. 1918, at the Seventh Party Congress, the Bolshevik Party—hitherto known as RSDRP(b)—adopted the name: The Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), i.e. RKP(b).
[71] Belov, pp. 116–17, citing *Arkhiv IML, fond 17.* For Varvara Nikolaevna Iakovleva, 1885–1944, see App. B.
[72] Belov, p. 117, footnote 1; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 653.
[73] *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part 1, col. 284.
[74] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 186.
[75] *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part 1, col. 284; Iroshnikov, pp. 224–5.
[76] Latsis in *Izvestiia*, 10 Feb. 1922.
[77] For Maks Abelevich Deich, 1886–1937, see App. B.
[78] Terekhin, p. 61 and *note*; Shabanov, pp. 21–2, 26.
[79] Maidanov, pp. 31–3, Kazan Cheka also began in Jan. 1918, see Litvin, p. 17.
[80] Belov, p. 478.
[81] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 153.
[82] *Izvestiia*, 22 Mar. 1918 (text in Belov, p. 103).
[83] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 153.
[84] *Izvestiia*, 19 May 1918, repeated on 30 May 1918 (text in Belov, pp 120–1).
[85] *Izvestiia*, 16 June 1918.
[86] *Ibid.*, 21 June 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 134–7).
[87] *Ezhenedelnik chrezvychainykh komissii.*
[88] *Ezhenedelnik VChK.*
[89] *Izvestiia*, 31 Aug. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 178–9).
[90] Belov, pp. 137–8, citing *TsGAOR, Kollektsiia dokumentov po istorii VChK.*
[91] *Polozhenie o ChK na mestakh*, 11 June 1918, in B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford.
[92] *Vestnik komissariata vnutrennikh del*, No. 15–16, 14 June 1918, p. 2.
[93] Known as *razvedyvatelnyi otriad* or *sekretnaia chast.*
[94] *Sledovateli.*
[95] *Sledstvennyi podotdel; sledstvennaia kollegiia.*
[96] *Konstruktsiia otdelov ChK*, 13 June and Aug. 1918, in B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford.
[97] 'Organizatsiia Otdela po borbe s kontrrevoliutsiei' in *Organizatsiia ChK*, 1918, pp. 7–8.
[98] 'Instruktsiia Otdela po borbe s kontrrevoliutsiei' in *Organizatsiia ChK*, 1918, p. 12.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

CHAPTER III

[1] Gorodetskii, p. 211.
[2] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 200.
[3] *Ibid.*, by VTsIK decision of 12 Dec., *Izvestiia*, 15 Dec. 1917.
[4] *Protokoly Ts.K. 1917–1918*, p. 85.
[5] Trotskii, 1924, p. 91.
[6] Radkey, 1950, pp. 2 and 49, citing *Delo naroda*, 22 Nov. 1917, and *Russkoe slovo*, No. 259.

[7] Schapiro, 1970, p. 183, citing I. S. Malchevskii (ed.), *Vserossiiskoe uchreditelnoe sobranie,* M.L., 1930, p. 115; Radkey, 1950, pp. 57–8, 80, and Chapter V.

[8] Lenin (3), Vol. XVIII, p. 311.

[9] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 638.

[10] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, pp. 162, 166.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 184–6, citing *Protokoly vtorogo sezda partii*, pp. 168–9.

[12] Trotskii, 1924, pp. 92–3.

[13] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 584.

[14] Radkey, 1950, p. 49.

[15] Bonch-Bruevich,1930, p. 241.

[16] For a vivid description of Uritskii's preparations for physical security in the Tauride Palace, and for the intimidation in and around it of opponents of the Bolsheviks, see Steinberg, 1929, pp. 62–4.

[17] Bonch-Bruevich, 1930, pp. 241–4. On 8 December 1917, Lenin requested the Party Central Committee: 'Please supply not less than 100 *absolutely* trustworthy Party members to Room No. 75, 3rd floor, for the Committe for Combating Pogroms (to do duty as commissars). The matter is super-important.' See *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXVI, p. 20.

[18] Belov, p. 88, quoting *Pravda*, 4 Jan. 1918.

[19] Chernov, p. 47; Vladimirova, p. 10; the latter adds that those arrested were released ten days later. Also arrested in Moscow were Kadet Party leaders—see Ilin, pp. 51–2.

[20] Radkey, 1963, pp. 336 ff. The Committee has also been referred to as 'Association' (Belov, p. 84) and as 'Union' (Golinkov, 1965, p. 120) 'for the Defence of the Constituent Assembly'.

[21] Viktor Mikhailovich Chernov, 1873–1952, leader of the SR (later Right SR) Party, Minister of Agriculture (May–Aug. 1917) in the Provisional Government—see *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 108.

[22] Iraklii Georgevich Tsereteli, 1882–1959, leading Menshevik, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs (May–Aug.) and later of the Interior in the Provisional Government; subsequently member of the Menshevik Government of Georgia.

[23] Steinberg, 1929, pp. 15–31.

[24] Chamberlin, Vol. I, pp. 368–9; Abramovich, 1962, p. 128; Shub, p. 321.

[25] Gorky, pp. 124–5.

[26] Steinberg, 1955, pp. 74–83; Bunyan and Fisher, 1934, pp. 386–7.

[27] Trotskii, 1924, p. 94.

[28] Steinberg, 1955, pp. 53–6.

[29] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 18.

[30] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 9: 145, 16 Dec. 1917, published 17 Dec. 1917.

[31] Gorodetskii, p. 298; Belov, p. 88.

[32] Belov, p. 103, quoting *Izvestiia*, 22 Mar. 1918.

[33] *S.U.R* 1917, No. 9: 146, published 17 Dec. 1917.

[34] Gorodetskii, p. 294, citing *Novia zhizn*, 16 Dec. 1917.

[35] Belov, p. 84, quoting Sovnarkom minutes.

[36] Steinberg, 1929, pp. 30–1.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 31–5.

[38] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, p. 111.

[39] Steinberg, 1929, pp. 35–7. However, *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XX1, pp. 111–12, footnote 2, asserts baldly, without citing any authority, that this Lenin-Stalin resolution *was* adopted by the Sovnarkom at the session on 19 December; this assumption is contradicted not only by Steinberg's testimony above, but also by the fact that the Sovnarkom adopted, at the same session, Steinberg's immediatly following resolution.

[40] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, pp. 112–13; emphases as in original.

[41] Steinberg, 1929, pp. 38–9.

[42] Leninskii Sbornik, Vol. XXI, pp. 113–14. Also in Belov, pp. 84–6, citing minutes of the Sovnarkom meeting of 21 Dec. 1917.

[43] Belov, p. 89, citing *Arkhiv IML pri TsK KPSS, fond 19.*

[44] Steinberg, 1929, pp. 91–2.

[45] Gorodetskii, p. 297, citing *TsPA IML, fond 19* (same as Arkhiv IML, above).

[46] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, pp. 581, 588.

[47] Gladkov and Smirnov, pp. 187–92.

[48] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 681. Belov, p. 99, even refers to Evseev as a Vecheka Deputy Chairman as at 6 Mar. 1918.

[49] Peters, 1924, pp. 6, 17.

[50] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 51 (naming him as Petr Alekseevich Aleksandrovich), pp. 576–7 (naming him as V. A. Aleksandrovich, alias P. A. Dmitrievskii). *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 227, names him Viacheslav Aleksandrovich; Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 510, as V. A. Aleksandrovich, but *Kreml za reshetkoi*, p. 205, as Petr Aleksandrovich alias Dmitrievskii. See also Steinberg, 1929, p. 93.

[51] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 51, 588, 595–6, 636.

[52] Ilin, p. 49.

[53] As at 6 July 1918, according to Latsis (1926, p. 88), seven LSRs figured in the twenty-strong Vecheka Collegium; less specifically, Peters (1924, p. 16) put the LSRs as constituting half the Collegium.

[54] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 510; Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 151.

[55] Steinberg, 1929, p. 92.

[56] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 191.

[57] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 597.

[58] Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 151.

[59] Latsis, 1926, pp. 88–9.

[60] Steinberg, 1929, p. 92.

[61] Steinberg, 1929, p. 95.

[62] Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 147.

[63] Steinberg, 1923, p. 31.

[64] Iroshnikov, p. 57, citing *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XX1, pp. 110–17, and *TsGAOR, fond 130*. In quoting *Leninskii Sbornik*, Iroshnikov repeats the latter's editorial error on p. 110, in referring to two separate investigation commissions attached, respectively, to the Revolutionary Tribunal and to the Petrograd Soviet, whereas this appears to have been a single commission, that of the Revolutionary Tribunal attached to the Petrograd Soviet—see Steinberg, 1929, pp. 125–36; Golinkov, 1965, p. 121; Chugaev, Vol. I, p. 11; Belov, p. 71.

[65] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 585.

[66] *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Vol. XV, p. 25.

[67] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, pp. 116–17; Steinberg, 1929, pp. 128–31.

[68] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, p. 110.

[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 114–17.

[70] Steinberg, 1929, pp. 129, 135–6. *Księga Polaków*, p. 449, shows Kozlovskii (Kozłowski) as chairman of the Investigation Commission from Dec. 1917 to 26 Feb. 1918.

[71] Steinberg, 1929, pp. 136–7.

[72] *Novaia zhizn*, 19 Apr. 1918, quoted in Bunyan and Fisher, 1934, pp. 579–80.

[73] Belov, p. 91.

[74] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 85.

[75] *Ibid.*, pp. 237–9.

[76] *Ibid.*, pp. 250–5.

[77] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 115–16; *Denikin Commission Report concerning Evpatoria.*

[78] Melgounov, 1925, p. 115. See *ibid.* for similar, if lesser, Crimean massacres in Simferopol, Yalta, Feodosia.

[79] *Ibid.*, pp. 113–14.

[80] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, p. 126 (text in Belov, p. 66).

[81] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 4: 64 (text in Belov, pp. 66–8).

[82] See article in *Entsiklopediia gosudarstva i prava*, Vol. III, P. Stuchka (editor),

1925–7, cols. 657–71, 1166–73, analysing the French revolutionary episodes of 1792, 1794, 1848, and 1871, and quoting Lenin's views on the necessity of using terror as a weapon of class warfare in a revolutionary situation.

[83] *Delo naroda*, 3 Dec. 1917.

[84] Schapiro, 1970, pp. 39–40. Cf. Wolfe, 1969, p. 21.

[85] See Wolfe, 1967, p. 80–1.

[86] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, p. 192.

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 311.

[89] Skiliagin *et al.*, pp. 20–1, citing *Oktiabrskoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie v Petrograde: Vospominaniia aktivnykh uchastnikov revoliutsii,* Leninigrad, 1956, pp. 280–1.

[90] Lenin (4), Vol. XXVI, p. 470; *Pravda*, 24 Jan. 1918.

[91] Steinberg, 1955, p. 145.

[92] Whilst not included in the contemporary collection of RSFSR laws (S.U.R.), the proclamation does figure in *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I (1957), pp. 490–1. It was published in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, 22 Feb. 1918.

[93] Trotskii, 1924, p. 104. Trotsky stated that the proclamation was drafted by himself; with this claim Steinberg, 1955, p. 145, concurred. However, the proclamation is included in the Soviet canon of Lenin's works—see Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, pp. 357–8.

[94] Trotskii, 1924, p. 104.

[95] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, pp. 492–4. (Not in *S.U.R.*) Here again the LSRs attempted, unavailingly, to delete this offending passage of the proclamation—see p. 494, footnote.

[96] Belov, p. 95, footnote.

[97] Steinberg, 1955, p. 146.

[98] Belov, pp. 95–6, quoting *Izvestiia*, 23 Feb. 1918.

[99] Belov, pp. 97–8, quoting *Izvestiia*, 23 Feb. 1918.

[100] Latsis, 1926, p. 85; Peters, 1931, p. 147; Drugov, No. 7, pp. 7–8.

[101] Steinberg, 1923, p. 41.

[102] *Izvestiia*, 6 Nov. 1918, reporting an interview with Peters.

[103] Latsis, 1926, p. 85.

[104] Golinkov, 1971, p. 70.

[105] Latsis, 1926, p. 85.

[106] Peters, 1927, 'Bolshaia Lubianka 2'.

[107] Latsis deposition in *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 195.

[108] Latsis, 1926, p. 88; Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 150.

[109] *Soiuz Zashchity Rodiny i Svobody.*

[110] Latsis, 1926, p. 88. See also Peters, 1927, 'Zashchita revoliutsii', p. 172, and Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 150.

[111] Peters, 1927, 'Bolshaia Lubianka 2'.

[112] Latsis, in *Izvestiia*, 10 Feb. 1922; Bunyan, 1936, pp. 227–8, quoting from *Novaia zhizn*, 14 July 1918.

[113] Latsis, 1926, p. 89. The *Malyi Sovnarkom*, originally created in December 1917 to deal with minor matters for which the Sovnarkom had insufficient time, was re-established by Sovnarkom resolution of 26 March 1918. It sometimes took purely political decisions on its own initiative (see *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1967/10, pp. 137–40). Its Chairman from 29 Mar. 1918 to 15 Nov. 1920 was none other than M. Iu. Kozlovskii (see *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Vol. XV, p. 26), its Secretary during 1918–20 being the Chekist, Iakov Saulovich Agranov, 1893–1938 (see App. B).

[114] The Sovnarkom decree of 28 Nov. 1917 had of course already pronounced the entire Kadet Party 'enemies of the people' and its leaders liable to arrest.

[115] *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1967/10, pp. 137–40, citing *TsGAOR, fond 130.*

[116] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 44: 536, *Izvestiia*, 18 June 1918.

[117] Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 148; Koval, pp. 38–9.

[118] Latsis, 1926, p. 86. See also Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 148.

[119] Peters, 1924, p. 9.

[120] Koval, pp. 33–63, *passim.*
[121] *Ibid.*, p. 38–9.
[122] *Izvestiia*, 3 Apr. 1918.
[123] Belov, p. 253. During the period Jan–Apr. 1918, 1,876 criminal acts were recorded in Moscow—see Koval, p. 41.
[124] *Izvestiia*, 18 May 1918. See also 30 July 1918.
[125] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, p. 116.
[126] *Izvestiia,* 26 July 1918.
[127] *Ibid.*, 2 June 1918, reported their execution.
[128] Latsis, 1921, p. 9.
[129] Carr, 1950, p. 163, footnote 1, speculates that Latsis's figure may have conceivably been the total for Moscow only.
[130] *Piatyi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, p. 49.
[131] *Ibid.*
[132] *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60.
[133] Steinberg, 1923, pp. 31–2, 37.
[134] Carr, 1950, pp. 153–4, footnote 4.
[135] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIV, p. 174, footnote.
[136] *S.U.R.P.* 1917, I, 1, No. 375, 12 Mar. 1917, quoted in Browder and Kerensky, 1961, pp. 199–200.
[137] Chamberlin, Vol. I, pp. 103, 185.
[138] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 1: 10, published 28 Oct. 1917.
[139] Trotskii, 1924, p. 101.
[140] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 44: 533, *Izvestiia*, 16 June 1918.
[141] *Izvestiia*, 22 June 1918.
[142] *Piatyi Vs. Sezd Sovetov*, p. 48.
[143] *Izvestiia*, 23 June 1918.
[144] Martov, L., *Struggling Russia*, Vol. I, 10 Jan. 1920, New York, p. 682. This pamphlet, *Doloi smertnuiu kazn*, written by Martov soon after Shchastny's trial, was printed and distributed by Menshevik workers in Moscow in August 1918—see Getzler, 1967, p. 176.
[145] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXVI, p. 503.
[146] Belov, p. 366—Lenin's speech on 6 Feb. 1920 at the Fourth Conference of Chekas.
[147] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 35: 468, 9 May 1918, *Izvestiia*, 14 May 1918.
[148] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 38: 498, 27 May 1918, *Izvestiia*, 31 May 1918.
[149] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 45.
[150] Schapiro, 1970, p. 191.
[151] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 57: 634, 4 Aug. 1918, *Izvestiia*, 6 Aug. 1918.
[152] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 43: 524, 11 June 1918, *Izvestiia*, 12 June 1918. Since the *Kombedy* usurped many of the functions of local Soviets, Lenin's eventual solution was to abolish them, in November 1918, whilst introducing their leading members into the Soviets, upon re-election of the latter—see *Shestoi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, pp. 17, 92–3.
[153] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 426, citing *Znamia truda*, 16 May 1918.
[154] *Vestnik Narodnogo Komissariata vnutrennikh del*, 1918, No. 21–22, p. 2.
[155] Petr Struve, pp. 592–3.
[156] Maxim Gorky, *Untimely Thoughts: Essays on Revolution, Culture and the Bolsheviks 1917–1918*, London, 1970, i.e. Gorky's articles taken from *Novaia zhizn.*
[157] Gorky, p. ix.
[158] For Aleksandr Grigorevich Beloborodov, 1891–1938, see *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, cols. 26–9; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 59; Schapiro, 1955, pp. 367–8.
[159] Bykov, pp. 87–113. For Pavel Mikhailovich Bykov, 1888–1953, see *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. I, pp. 204–6.
[160] For Iakov Mikhailovich Iurovskii, 1878–1938, see App. B.
[161] Sokolov, pp. 134–8. For a lucid summary of the whole execution episode, largely based on Bykov's and Sokolov's books, see Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 84–95. This version

is disputed by Summers and Mangold (Anthony Summers and Tom Mangold, *The File on the Tsar*, London, 1976), who contend that the Tsaritsa and the four Tsarevnas escaped execution at Ekaterinburg, but perished in Soviet captivity several months later.

[162] Trotsky, 1958, p. 81.

[163] Bykov, p. 121.

[164] *Ibid.*, pp. 122–4.

[165] *Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia*, 1919, p. 49.

[166] Lenin (1), Vol. XI, Part II, p. 429.

[167] V. Volodarskii (Party name of Moisei Markovich Goldshtein), a former Bundist and Menshevik, joined the Bolsheviks in 1917. For his biography, see *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, cols. 89–90.

[168] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 106.

[169] Steinberg, 1923, pp. 42–3.

[170] Golinkov, 1971, pp. 67–8.

[171] *Novaia zhizn*, 9 June 1918.

[172] As Boris Nicolaevsky pointed out in the *New Leader*, 7 Apr. 1958, p. 30, this refers to both the Communist and the LSR parties; the Vecheka was still a diarchy.

[173] *Svoboda Rossii*, 9 June 1918. Neither the *Novaia zhizn* nor the *Svoboda Rossii* account of the interview is complete; they complement each other.

[174] Presumably the 'Socialist Fatherland in Danger' 'decree' of 21 Feb. 1918.

[175] *Novaia zhizn*, 9 June 1918.

[176] *Svoboda Rossii*, 9 June 1918.

[177] Radek, p. 187.

CHAPTER IV

[1] *Piatyi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, pp. 5–36, 48–60. The LSRs, at their first independent party conference, held in November 1917, had renounced rule by terror as a policy, but without abjuring the tactic of individual acts of terrorism; see Adasia Steinberg, 1937, p. 64.

[2] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 129–30, quoting the minutes of the LSR Party Central Committee meeting of 24 June 1918.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 224, Bliumkin's deposition to the Kiev Cheka on 17–19 Apr. 1919.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 224–6.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 200–1. This 'troika', as Spiridonova called it, was probably the same Bureau, consisting of Spiridonova, Golubovskii, and Maiorov, which the LSR Central Committee had appointed at its meeting on 24 June for the purpose of co-ordinating the terrorist action project—see p. 130.

[6] *BSE* (1), Vol. VI, 1927, col. 537.

[7] *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 10 Feb. 1966.

[8] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 225—Bliumkin's deposition. Latsis's deposition gave Bliumkin's date of entry into the Vecheka as the first days of June 1918. *Krasnaia kniga VChK* contains a photograph of Bliumkin.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 191—Dzerzhinsky's deposition; Peters, 1927, 'Zashchita revoliutsii', p. 173.

[10] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 225—Bliumkin's deposition.

[11] Bothmer, p. 12.

[12] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 187–91—Dzerzhinsky's deposition.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 138–9, 225; Katkov, 1962, pp. 59–61.

[14] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 142.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

[16] A photograph of the forged Vecheka document figures in Zubov, 1971, between pp. 80–1.

[17] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 225–8 (Bliumkin's deposition); 144 ff. (statements by German Embassy eyewitnesses, Dr. Riezler, Counsellor, and Lieutenant Leonard Muller); p. 194 (Latsis's statement—also published in *Izvestiia*, 18 July 1918). Graphic

accounts of the assassination also figure in Hilger and Meyer, pp. 1–6, and Bothmer, pp. 70–9.

[18] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 628. For Dmitrii I. Popov, 1892–1921—see *ibid.*, and *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 13 Feb. 1966.

[19] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 191–2—Dzerzhinsky's deposition.

[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 195–6—Latsis's deposition. Latsis was arrested by Zharov, a sailor; Aleksandr Zharov was commandant of the Vecheka HQ building (see *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 19 Feb. 1966)—another instance of an LSR being in a key Vecheka post. Zharov was executed on 7 July 1918.

[21] Latsis, 1926, p. 88. Identifiable LSR members of the Vecheka Collegium as at 6 July 1918 were: V. A. Aleksandrovich, G. D. Zaks, M. F. Emelianov, I. I. Ilin, P. Sidorov, V. D. Volkov, D. I. Popov.

[22] Peters, 1924, p. 16.

[23] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 191, 193—Dzerzhinsky's deposition. See also Peters, 1924, p. 16, and Peters, 1927, 'Zashchita revoliutsii', p. 173.

[24] Peters, 1924, pp. 17, 18.

[25] Fridman, p. 97.

[26] Peters, 1924, pp. 18–19. For a vivid eyewitness account of the LSR seizure, and Bolshevik recovery, of the Lubianka HQ, see Fridman, pp. 98–101.

[27] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 55. The LSRs also seized the telephone exchange, several railway stations, and some newspaper presses—see Fridman, p. 99.

[28] I. I. Vatsetis, 1873–1938, an Imperial Army colonel, had joined the Red Army as a military specialist. During Sep. 1918—July 1919 he was C. in C. of the Red Army, being then replaced by S. S. Kamenev—see Erickson, p. 846. The Red Army's Latvian Division—only a small part of which was stationed in Moscow—had been constituted on 13 Apr. 1918, under Vatsetis's command, and consisted of 9 rifle regiments, 1 cavalry regiment, and ancillary units—see *BSE* (3), Vol. XIV, pp. 216–17.

[29] Steinberg, 'The Events of July 1918', undated unpublished MS at Hoover Institution, Stanford, pp. 21–2, quoting from Vatsetis's *History of Latvian Fighters*, published by the Latvian Communist Party's Publishing Company, 1922. For an account of the conspicuous role of the Lettish troops in quelling the LSR Rising, see Draudin, pp. 62–3. See also Steinberg, 1935, p. 214.

[30] Sboichakov *et al.*, pp. 93–4, citing *Etapy bolshogo puti*, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1962, p. 271. For biographical sketch of Mikhail Sergeevich Kedrov, 1878–1941, see Chapter XII.

[31] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 181, this being part of a detailed report by Podvoiskii and Muralov regarding the military engagement in Moscow on 6–7 July 1918.

[32] Steinberg, 'The Events of July 1918', quoting from Vatsetis's *History of Latvian Fighters*.

[33] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 204–5.

[34] *Pravda*, 8 July 1918.

[35] *Izvestiia*, 9 July 1918. The sailor A. Ia. Poliakov, known as Boris Poliakov, commanded the Cheka unit which recaptured the Vecheka headquarters building from the LSRs—see Fridman, pp. 100–1.

[36] Steinberg, 'The Events of July 1918', p. 22.

[37] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 182.

[38] Peters claimed that 400 rebels were arrested in Moscow—see *Izvestiia*, 9 July 1918, but, according to *Izvestiia*, 10 July 1918, only 105 LSRs were held by the Vecheka. The hunt for insurgents continued, and altogether some 1,000 were reportedly detained in Moscow—see *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 13 Feb. 1966.

[39] Peters, 1924, pp. 19–20.

[40] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 179, and *Izvestiia*, 14 July 1918, both give the names of the thirteen condemned men, but not their execution date. One of those condemned, Vladimir Nemtsev, though wounded, miraculously survived the execution, and, after interrogation, was released by the Special Commission of Inquiry—see *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 18 and 19 Feb. 1966.

[41] Steinberg, 1935, p. 216; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 244. An inaccurate account of the execution is given in the LSR publication, *Kreml za reshetkoi*, p. 205.

[42] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 186.

[43] *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 8 Feb. 1966.

[44] Rudnev, 1962, pp. 86–8. Viktor Eduardovich Kingisepp, 1882–1922; 1906 joined RSDRP; May 1918 appointed to investigation department of the Revolutionary Tribunal attached to VTsIK; Aug. 1918 attached to Vecheka as special investigator; Nov. 1918 sent to Estonia on an underground revolutionary mission; member of illegal Estonian Communist Party's Central Committee; 2/3 May 1922 arrested in Tallinn and immediately executed—see *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 186; *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 137–8, 186; Rudnev, 1962, pp. 86–92, 97–8, 100, 144; Rudnev and Tsybov articles in *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 8–24 Feb. 1966; Sofinov, p. 104.

[45] *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 24 Feb. 1966. The proceedings of the Special Commission of Inquiry were described in *Sledovatel Verkhovnogo tribunala*, by D. Rudnev and S. Tsybov, serialised in *Sovetskaia Estoniia*, 8–24 Feb. 1966.

[46] Popov fled to the Ukraine and joined Makhno's partisan movement; captured in Kharkov by the Cheka in late 1920, he was taken to Moscow and there sentenced to death in May 1921—see *Lenin i VChK*, p. 628; Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 195–7, 244. Cf. Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 239; Zubov, 1965, p. 180, note 1.

[47] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 22–3.

[48] Steinberg, 1935, p. 216.

[49] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 194 (Dzerzhinsky's deposition), p. 195 (Latsis's deposition).

[50] *Piatyi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, pp. 106, 196. In Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 527 *note*, Zaks is incorrectly described as an active participant in the LSR Rising. This may derive from Lenin's telephone message sent, on 6 July, to the Moscow Soviet, ordering that all Cheka cars should be stopped and all LSR members of the Vecheka Collegium be arrested, especially Zaks and Aleksandrovich—see *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 30. Obviously Lenin had jumped to a false conclusion about Zaks.

[51] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, p. 518, *note*. For 'Populist-Communists' see Schapiro, 1955, pp. 180–2.

[52] Naglovskii, 1968, p. 169.

[53] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 636.

[54] The Red Army took Kiev on 6 Feb. 1919.

[55] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 224–31, Bliumkin's deposition.

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 231–5.

[57] Barmine, pp. 109–10, 140.

[58] *Case of Leon Trotsky*, pp. 133–4; *Biulleten oppozitsii*, No. 9, Feb.–Mar., 1930, p. 8.

[59] *BSE* (1), Vol. VI, 1927, col. 537.

[60] Serge, p. 256.

[61] Hilger and Meyer, pp. 5–6, 8–9; Bothmer, pp. 72, 78.

[62] Nadezhda Mandelstam, 1971, pp. 103–6. She dismisses as inaccurate the embroidered version of the Poets' Café incident presented by the poet Georgii Ivanov, pp. 124–8.

[63] Dzerzhinsky's deposition in Belov, p. 154, citing *Arkhiv IML pri TsK KPSS, fond 76*. This whole passage in Dzerzhinsky's deposition concerning Bliumkin was omitted from *Krasnaia kniga VChK* (p. 191), ostensibly—as explained in the editor's introduction to Chapter II ('The LSR Rising')—on the grounds that it contained uncorroborated hearsay evidence; also omitted was the evidence—some of it of a compromising nature—given by a certain Zaitsev regarding Bliumkin. The real reason for the omission was that by 1920, when the *Krasnaia kniga VChK* was published, Bliumkin had been rehabilitated, and was accepted as a Soviet hero. His exposure in 1929 as a Trotskyist made him a traitor once again, hence the restoration of the cut passages in Belov.

[64] Agabekov, 1930, p. 221.

[65] Deutscher, 1963, pp. 87–8, citing *The Trotsky Archives*, Houghton Library, Harvard.

[66] Agabekov, 1930, p. 226. See also *Biulleten oppozitsii*, No. 9, Feb.–Mar., 1930, pp. 8–10.

[67] Barmine, p. 110. It was also in late 1929 that Sultan-Galiev, an expelled Party member, was rearrested and disappeared—see Schapiro, 1970, p. 353.

[68] Katkov, 1962, 'The Assassination of Count Mirbach', pp. 53–93; Possony, pp. 309–11; Ulam, pp. 424–5.

[69] Hilger and Meyer, pp. 6–7. Cf. Bonch-Bruevich, 1963, 'Ubiistvo germanskogo posla Mirbakha i vosstanie levykh eserov', pp. 232–4.

[70] Bothmer, p. 88.

[71] *Pravda*, 8 July 1918, quoting from Dzerzhinsky's report to the Sovnarkom concerning the LSR insurrection.

[72] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 114.

[73] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 129–36.

[74] Steinberg, 1935, p. 226; Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 56, 529.

[75] *Pravda*, 8 July 1918.

[76] *Izvestiia*, 8 July 1918.

[77] Peters, 1924, p. 20; cf. Tishkov, p. 18.

[78] Belov, p. 172, quoting from minutes of Sovnarkom meeting of 22 Aug. 1918.

[79] Circular from Commissar for NKVD, Petrovskii, to provincial Soviets, dated 30 July 1918, in *Sbornik prikazov NKVD*, 1918, p. 24.

[80] In October 1918, for instance, some local Cheka collegia still contained LSRs—see *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, pp. 30–1.

CHAPTER V

[1] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 528.

[2] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 34. *Izvestiia*, 3 Sept. 1918, announced Trotsky's appointment as Chairman of the *Revoliutsionnyi voennyi sovet (Revvoensovet)*. The *Revvoensovet*'s functions were defined in *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 97: 978, of 30 Sept. 1918.

[3] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 91–92: 924, signed 30 Nov. 1918, established the SRKO *(Sovet Rabochei i Krestianskoi Oborony)*.

[4] *Sovet Truda i Oborony*.

[5] The precise date of entry of these newcomers into the Vecheka has not been established, but all four became Vecheka Collegium members before the end of March 1919—see Belov, pp. 266–7. For F. D. Medved, 1890–1943, see App. B.

[6] This makes nonsense of Sofinov's claim (Sofinov, p. 40) that 40 Gub-Chekas and 365 Uezd-Chekas were formed in the first half of 1918. We know that the First Conference of Chekas in June 1918 was attended by representatives of only 43 territorial Chekas altogether. Sofinov's figure may well state the position as at the *end* of 1918.

[7] *Izvestiia*, 28 Aug. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 174–6).

[8] A representative selection is to be found in *Prilozhenie dlia rukovodstva pri organizatsii i rabote chrezvychainykh komissii i ikh otdelov. Izdanie VChK*, 1918, containing a series of government ordinances in such fields as customs and excise, documentation for travel abroad, etc., etc.

[9] *Izvestiia*., 7 July 1918, 13 Aug. 1918.

[10] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, pp. 9–10.

[11] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 66: 728, *Izvestiia*, 14 Sept. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 192–5).

[12] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 80: 842, 28 Oct. 1918, *Izvestiia*, 2 Nov. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 203–4). For detail see Chapter VII.

[13] Belov, p. 197, quoting from minutes of Party Central Committee meeting on 16 Sept. 1918.

[14] Gerson, p. 47.

[15] Alidin *et al.*, pp. 4–5, 16–17, 79–83, 92–8.

[16] Sofinov, p. 130; the Central Committee decision was echoed by the Moscow Party Committee on 12 Oct. (Alidin *et al.*, p. 102) and by the Moscow Party Committee jointly with the Moscow Soviet on 16 Oct. (Alidin, *et al.*, p. 104).

[17] Alidin *et al.*, pp. 104–5, 112, 120.

[18] B. A. Breslav, 1882–1943, Party member since 1903 and, in 1918, member of Moscow Soviet Presidium; after service in the M-Cheka, he headed OOs in the field—see biographical note in Alidin *et al.*, p. 304.

[19] For Vasilii Nikolaevich Mantsev, 1888–1939, see App. B.

[20] For Stanislav Adamovich Messing, 1890–1946, see App. B.

[21] Alidin *et al.*, pp. 8, 101 (quoting *Izvestiia*, 9 Oct. 1918), 132 (quoting *Pravda*, 1 Jan. 1919), 139–40 (quoting *Izvestiia*, 31 Jan. 1919), 141–2, 146, 163.

[22] Sofinov, p. 130.

[23] Alidin *et al.*, pp. 157–61, 166–8, 185–9, etc.

[24] *Narodnyi Komissariat Putei Soobshcheniia.*

[25] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 24: 330, *Gazeta VRiKP*, 16 Feb. 1918.

[26] *Vserossiiskaia Mezhduvedomstvennaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiia po okhrane dorog.*

[27] *Voenno-prodovolstvennye otriady.*

[28] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 30: 395, *Izvestiia*, 26 Mar. 1918.

[29] *Voennaia okhrana zheleznykh dorog.*

[30] Belov, p. 135.

[31] *Polozhenie o ChK na mestakh*, 11 June 1918, paras. 21–22. See Chapter II.

[32] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 54: 600, 17 July 1918, *Izvestiia*, 23 July 1918.

[33] *Upravlenie po okhrane putei soobshcheniia.*

[34] *Rechnaia Militsiia*, established by *S.U.R.* No. 55: 608, 25 July 1918, *Izvestiia*, 28 July 1918.

[35] *Izvestiia*, 27 July 1918. The text in *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. III, pp. 96–100, includes a Lenin draft specifying the creation of a Vecheka Railway Department, to function under the supervision of a Commission of Inspection consisting of representatives of *Vikzhedor* and *Vseprofzhel*, whereas the published Sovnarkom pronouncement merely refers to the attachment to the Vecheka of a special department (and) a Commission of Inspection, composed of *Vikzhedor* and *Vseprofzhel* representatives.

[36] *Izvestiia*, 4 Aug. 1918.

[37] *Organizatsiia ChK*, 1918, p. 26.

[38] Announcement by Peters, as Vecheka Chairman, in *Izvestiia*, 16 Aug. 1918. Text in Belov, p. 171.

[39] Text of Instruction appears in *Organizatsiia ChK*, 1918, pp. 28–32, and—in slightly varied form—in *Zheleznodorozhnyi Otdel*, pp. 46–53,

[40] Text of Sovnarkom resolution of 7 Aug. 1918 in *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. III, pp. 187–8.

[41] *Izvestiia*, 28 Aug. 1918.

[42] The last-named sub-department had been created, in embryo form, on 11 Sept. 1918, as a section of the Vecheka Railway Department, with local representation in all Provincial Cheka Railway Departments—see *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, p. 26.

[43] *Rezoliutsii 2-oi Vs. Konferentsii ChK*, 28 Nov. 1918, in Belov, pp. 226–7.

[44] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 86: 895, 28 Nov. 1918, *Izvestiia*, 30 Nov. 1918.

[45] *Izvestiia*, 6 Dec. 1918; issued as appendix to *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 86: 895.

[46] Sofinov, pp. 125–6.

[47] Tolstoi, p. 78.

[48] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 44: 539, 28 May 1918, *Izvestiia*, 18 June 1918. Accordingly, 28 May is celebrated in the USSR as the anniversary of the Soviet Frontier Guard's formation—see *Nedelia* (Sunday supplement to *Izvestiia*), 1 June 1969, p. 13.

[49] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 48: 569, 29 June 1918, *Izvestiia*, 3 July 1918.

[50] Sofinov, p. 114.

[51] Tolstoi, p. 79. For political background of Vladimir Dmitrievich Frolov and Petr Frolovich Fedotov, see *ibid.*, footnote 8; cf. Fedotov, pp. 89–91, 94–5.

[52] A biographical note in Fedotov, between pp. 320–1, describes Fedotov as 'First Commissar' of the Frontier Guard; however, *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, p. 92, establishes that in July 1918 Frolov was GUPO Commissar, and Fedotov his deputy.

[53] Tolstoi, p. 79.

[54] *Ibid.*, referring to Sergei Grigorevich Shamshev; see *ibid.*, footnote 12, regarding Aleksandr Leontevich Pevnev.

[55] See Chapter II.

[56] Belov, p. 140, footnote.

[57] Kozhevnikov, p. 54, n.s.c.

[58] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, p. 26. According to Belov, p. 140, footnote, Dzerzhinsky established 34 Frontier Chekas, plus 60 Frontier Commissars during July 1918, but such rapid progress within one month seems unlikely.

[59] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 4, 13 Oct. 1918, pp. 22–3.

[60] *Instruktsiia pogranichnym chrezvychainym komissiiam*, 12 June/2 Sept. 1918, *passim*.

[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 35–6; *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 4, 13 Oct. 1918, p. 22.

[62] Agabekov, 1930, p. 27.

[63] The answer may lie in *F. E. Dzerzhinskii i okhrana granits Sovetskogo gosudarstva. Sbornik dokumentov i statei*, Moscow, 1977 (not seen).

[64] *Instruktsiia Chrezvychainym Komissiiam na mestakh*, 1 Dec. 1918, pp. 7–8, 15–16. Copy in B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford.

[65] Sofinov, p. 114.

[66] Fedotov, p. 90; Braude, p. 119.

[67] Sofinov, p. 114 and footnote.

[68] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 61: 668, signed by Lenin on 19 Aug. 1918, *Izvestiia*, 22 Aug. 1918. Zyrianov, pp. 27–8.

[69] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. V, p. 580; Ivanchishin, pp. 27–8.

[70] Belov, p. 138.

[71] *Izvestiia*, 16 June 1918.

[72] *Ibid.*, article summarizing Fomin's report.

[73] Sofinov, p. 46. Text of resolution in Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 39–40, 646, *note* 3. For Ivan Nikolaevich Polukarov, 1895–1920, see p. 694.

[74] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 5.

[75] Tishkov, p. 28.

[76] 'Polozhenie o formirovanii Korpusa', in *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 2, 29 Sept. 1918, pp. 13–14. See also the Corps enlistment undertaking, the Corps internal instruction, and Vecheka Order No. 73, pp. 14–15. Vasilii Viktorovich Kamenshchikov, 1879–1959, headed the Corps during June-Oct. 1918—see Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 684. In Jan. 1919 the Viatka Cheka battalion, when at full strength, numbered 900 men—see Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 230.

[77] Tishkov, p. 28. If correct, this would be a remarkably swift buildup.

[78] *Ibid.* For Konstantin Maksimovich Valobuev, 1879–1942, see App. B.

[79] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, pp. 22, 24.

[80] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 80: 842, 28 Oct 1918, *Izvestiia*, 2 Nov. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 203–4).

[81] *Rezoliutsii 2-oi Vserossiiskoi Konferentsii ChK*, 28 Nov. 1918, in Belov, p. 229.

[82] Tishkov, p. 29; Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 85.

[83] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 85.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

[85] Tishkov, pp. 28–9.

[86] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 6.

[87] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 33; Sofinov, pp. 91, 126.

[88] Latsis, 1921, p. 30.

[89] Sofinov, p. 126.
[90] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 4, 13 Oct. 1918, pp. 25–31.
[91] Belov, p. 479.
[92] Sofinov, p. 127.
[93] *Rezoliutsii 2-oi Vs. Konferentsii ChK*, 28 Nov. 1918, in Belov, p. 229.
[94] Sofinov, pp. 126–7.
[95] Bunyan, 1936, p. 267, citing Zaitsev, *1918 god. Ocherki po istorii russkoi grazhdanskoi voiny*, p. 182.
[96] Schapiro, 1956, p. 28.
[97] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 32; Erickson, p. 33.
[98] Trotskii, 1923, Vol. I, p. 151. See also *Lenin i VChK*, p. 216, for Lenin's note of 8 June 1919 to Sklianskii on this topic.
[99] Melgounov, 1925, p. 17.
[100] Sofinov, p. 127.
[101] *Ibid.*, pp. 126–7.
[102] *Ibid.*, pp. 128–9, citing *Izvestiia*, 21 and 27 Sept. 1918.
[103] Sofinov, p. 129; Belov, pp. 236, 481. In the USSR, 19 Dec. 1918 is the official date of the foundation of the Soviet military counter-espionage organs—later known as 'Smersh'.
[104] Viktorov, p. 62.
[105] Sofinov, p. 128.
[106] Sofinov, p. 129.
[107] Belov, p. 259, footnote 2.
[108] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 6: 58, *Izvestiia*, 21 Feb. 1919.
[109] Sofinov, pp. 129–30.
[110] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 6: 58, *Izvestiia*, 21 Feb. 1919. Under point 3 of this decree, the Vecheka OO was to be headed by a Vecheka Collegium member, appointed by agreement with the *Revvoensovet*.
[111] Belov, p. 224, footnote.
[112] *Instruktsiia Chrezvychainym Komissiiam na mestakh*, 1 Dec. 1918.
[113] *Ibid.*
[114] Peters, 1924, p. 32.
[115] See Chapter II.
[116] According to Melgounov, 1925, pp. 248–9, in 1919 Vecheka HQ staff totalled around 2,000 personnel.
[117] As noted earlier, 38 Provincial Chekas existed as at 28 Aug. 1918.
[118] Sofinov, p. 40, reports 40 Provincial Chekas and 365 District Chekas formed by mid-1918; as already commented, this number of District Chekas is excessive for mid-1918, but could well apply to the end of the year, averaging out at 9 District Chekas per province (Latsis, 1921, p. 28, notes that some provinces numbered up to 18 districts).
[119] Statistics correct as at 1 Sept. 1918. See *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, p. 26.
[120] Probably exaggerating, Tishkov, p. 28, reports 35 Cheka battalions in existence by late July 1918; it is questionable whether these were recruited to full strength (750 men per battalion) by 1 Jan. 1919.

CHAPTER VI

[1] Lenin (5), Vol. XL, p. 101, in a speech before VTsIK on 2 Feb. 1920. Lenin had made much the same point in an earlier speech, on 5 Dec. 1919, at the Seventh Congress of Soviets. Indeed, this charge against the Entente had become Lenin's constant refrain: see Lenin (3), Vol. XXIV, p. 402 (July 1919), p. 425 (Aug. 1919), pp. 567, 604 (Dec. 1919).
[2] Silverlight, p. 64. However Ullman, p. 334, disagrees.
[3] See, for instance, *Izvestiia*, 31 July 1918. In *Izvestiia* of 25 Aug. 1918, the Vecheka

specifically requested all territorial Chekas to submit reports on their activities, with supporting documentation, for purposes of publicity.

[4] Vladimirova, p. 291. Litvin, p. 6, reports 245 serious peasant revolts during 1918, in which over 22,000 Soviet and Party personnel perished.

[5] *Izvestiia*, 27 Aug. 1918.

[6] Dzerzhinsky was temporarily suspended from the Vecheka at this time, following the LSR Rising.

[7] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 142, item 257.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 143, item 259.

[9] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 443, *note* 153. For other of Lenin's telegrams, in similar vein, despatched to the provinces during August 1918, see: Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 143, item 258; p. 144, items 260–1; p. 148, item 267; p. 149, item 270; p. 152, item 276; p. 154, item 280; p. 156, item 283; p. 160, item 292; p. 161, item 294.

[10] *Izvestiia*, 23 Aug. 1918.

[11] *Vengerskie Internatsionalisty v Oktiabrskoi Revoliutsii i Grazhdanskoi Voine v SSSR*, Vol. II, 1968, p. 388, *note*.

[12] Nicolaevsky, 1965, p. 231. For Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bulganin, 1895–1975, see App. B.

[13] Golinkov, 1971, p. 108.

[14] *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, 26 July 1918. See also *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 172–3.

[15] *Izvestiia*, 28 Aug. 1918. This seems an inadequate count.

[16] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, p. 539.

[17] Uralov, 1929, pp. 105–7.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 115–16.

[19] Skiliagin, p. 37, citing *GAORSS LO, fond 73.*

[20] Uralov, 1929, pp. 116–17. Uritskii's strong opposition to executions, and his reluctance to sign death sentences, were gratuitously attested on 26 Feb. 1921 to the imprisoned Menshevik leader, F. Dan, by Komarov, Chairman of the Petrograd Cheka—see Dan, pp. 119, 197–8. For Nikolai Pavlovich Komarov, 1886–1937, see App. B.

[21] Uralov, 1929, pp. 120–6; *Izvestiia*, 31 Aug. 1918.

[22] Peters, 1924, p. 29; Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 248–9. Nevertheless, Dzerzhinsky did interrogate Kanegisser—see Uralov, 1929, p. 124.

[23] *Pravda*, 3 Jan. 1918 (text in Belov, p. 87). See also Bonch-Bruevich, 1963, 'Pokushenie na V. I. Lenina 1 ianvaria 1918', pp. 257–73. This attempt on Lenin's life was investigated by K. E. Voroshilov, then a member of the Vecheka Collegium, who personally interrogated one of the alleged would-be assassins, Lieutenant Shtyrev—see Akshinskii, p. 55, footnote.

[24] Lenin (2), Vol. XXIII, p. 202.

[25] Peters, 1924, pp. 29–31.

[26] Bonch-Bruevich, 1923, 'Pokushenie na V. I. Lenina v Moskve 30 avgusta 1918 goda', p. 20.

[27] Volkovicher, pp. 282–5. V. E. Kingisepp, who joined the Vecheka in August 1918 as an investigator for important cases, interrogated the Right SR, Tarasova, an arrested associate of the would-be assassin—see Rudnev, 1962, pp. 91, 97–8.

[28] Volkovicher, pp. 282–5, quoting from interrogation reports drawn up by A. Diakonov, Chairman of the Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal, Peters, Kurskii, and A. Skrypnik. These reports were laid before the VTsIK Revolutionary Tribunal.

[29] Schapiro, 1955, p. 153, footnote 13.

[30] Malkov, 1959, pp. 158–61. Several of the more poignant passages in Malkov's account of this episode were omitted from the second, revised, 1961 edition of Malkov's book.

[31] *Izvestiia*, 4 Sept. 1918. *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, p. 27, included Kaplan as No. 33 on a list of 90 persons executed by the Vecheka: 'Kaplan, Right SR, for an attempt on the life of comrade Lenin'.

[32] Steinberg, 1935, p. 98.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

[34] Balabanoff, 1938, p. 209. In a subsequent account, thirty years later, Balabanoff's recollection of this episode failed her, for she there indicated that at the time of her visit to the wounded Lenin, Dora Kaplan's execution had not yet been decided; Balabanoff wrote: 'Indeed, several years after Lenin's death, illegal papers published by members of the party to which the assailant, Dora Kaplan belonged, reported that she was alive, exiled to Siberia. This news has recently been confirmed.' See Balabanoff, 1968, pp. 11–13. Possibly Balabanoff was here referring to the (unconvincing) claim by an anonymous female ex-political prisoner, in her memoirs, that she had met Kaplan in Moscow's Butyrki prison in 1938; Kaplan allegedly then told the anonymous memoirist that instead of being shot she had been condemned to five years imprisonment because 'Lenin himself requested that in view of my revolutionary services I be given such a light sentence.' See *Iz zapisok politzakliuchennoi*, 1952, p. 21. Alternatively, Balabanoff may have had in mind one or other of the periodic reports that Kaplan was serving as a prison librarian in Moscow or in Siberia; there was also a report, cabled from Moscow to the U.S.A. in January 1958, concerning Kaplan's alleged recent 'natural' death in a concentration camp—see Possony, 1966, p. 318. However, Malkov's evidence, taken in conjunction with the contemporary press reports of Kaplan's execution, must be accepted as conclusive.

[35] *Case of Leon Trotsky*, 1937, p. 374.

[36] *Izvestiia*, 31 Aug. 1918; Peters, 1927, 'Zashchita Revoliutsii', p. 184.

[37] *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, 31 Aug. 1918.

[38] Belov, pp. 179–80.

[39] *Krasnaia gazeta*, 1 Sept. 1918, quoted in *Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia*; 1919, p. 97.

[40] *Izvestiia*, 3 Sept. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 181–2).

[41] Peters, 1924, pp. 31–2.

[42] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 65: 710, 5 Sept. 1918; *Izvestiia*, 10 Sept. 1918.

[43] Latsis, 1926, p. 92.

[44] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, p. 8 (text in Belov, pp. 197–8).

[45] *Izvestiia*, 3 Sept. 1918; *Izvestiia* of 7 Sept. 1918 put the precise number at 512.

[46] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, p. 19, quoting from a speech on 15 Oct. 1919 at the Petrograd Cheka conference; also in *Izvestiia*, 19 Oct. 1918.

[47] *Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia*, 1919, p. 26.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[49] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 106—see Chapter III.

[50] Stasova, 1957, pp. 100–3. Elena Dmitrievna Stasova, 1873–1966, born into the intelligentsia, joined the RSDRP in 1898 and served as secretary to the Bolshevik Party's Central Committee, of which she was herself elected member in March 1918 and March 1919 (Seventh and Eighth Party Congresses). In 1921–6, she functioned as the Comintern's underground representative in Berlin—see p. 101; *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 436–8; Haupt, pp. 244–5.

[51] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 653.

[52] *Bulletin of the Russian Liberation Union*, No. 1 [February] 1919, p. 2.

[53] Solzhenitsyn, Vol. II (1974), p. 307. Bokii was also referred to as Petrograd Cheka Chairman as at 15 Oct. 1918—see *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, p. 17.

[54] *Izvestiia*, 7 Sept. 1918. R. H. B. Lockhart, 1932, p. 329, dates the execution on 7 Sept. 1918.

[55] Kobiakov, pp. 273–5. Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 70, wrongly places these persons' execution in Petrograd.

[56] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, pp. 27–8.

[57] *Ibid.*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, p. 22.

[58] Nicolaevsky, 1965, p. 230, and footnote.

[59] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, pp. 18–19.

[60] *Ibid.*, No. 3, 6 Oct. 1918, pp. 26–30.

[61] *Ibid.*, No. 5, 20 Oct. 1918, pp. 24–6.

[62] *Izvestiia Tsaritsynskoi gubernskoi Chrezvychainoi komissii*, No. 1, Nov. 1918, pp. 16–22—in the B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford. Another 50 were executed on 29 Nov. 1918; see p. 36.

[63] *Izvestiia*, 29 Sept. 1918.

[64] Moroz, 'V. Ch. K. i Oktiabrskaia Revoliutsiia' in *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 11, Oct. 1919, p. 4. Moroz made much the same point when addressing the Petrograd Cheka Conference on 15 Oct. 1918—see *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, pp. 19–20.

[65] *Pravda*, 31 Aug. 1918.

[66] *Severnaia kommuna*, No. 109, 19 Sept. 1918, p. 2.

[67] See Chapter III, also Prologue.

[68] Latsis in *Krasnyi Terror*, No. 1, Kazan, 1 Nov. 1918, quoted in Wolfe, 1967, p. 82 (*pace* Wolfe, Latsis was not as yet Chairman of the Ukrainian Cheka). Most of the above passage was quoted by E. M. Iaroslavskii in an article criticising Latsis in *Pravda*, 25 Dec. 1918. In his rejoinder in *Pravda*, 29 Dec. 1918, Latsis stuck to his guns, declaring: 'In a moment of most desperate class war it is impossible to obtain material evidence. At a time of total class confrontation, the investigator's most valuable information consists precisely of data concerning (present) class affiliation, class origin ... education and profession.'

[69] Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 160.

[70] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXVII, p. 410, first published in *Pravda*, 7 Nov. 1926.

[71] *Instruktsiia iuridicheskomu otdelu*, undated, top secret document in the B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford.

[72] *Denikin Commission Report concerning Kharkov*, 1919, p. 153.

[73] Berkman, pp. 268–71.

[74] Peters, 1924, p. 32. On 23 Jan. 1919, Peters publicly put Cheka executions at 500—see *Izvestiia*, 25 Jan. 1919.

[75] Melgounov, 1925, p. 4, quoting Peters from *Utro Moskvy*, No. 21, 4 Nov. 1918.

[76] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, p. 21.

[77] *Izvestiia*, 13 Sept. 1918.

[78] *Izvestiia*, 13 Oct. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 186–90).

[79] Peters, 1924, p. 32.

[80] Moroz, 'V. Ch. K. i Oktiabrskaia Revoliutsiia' in *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 11, Oct. 1919, p. 6.

[81] Latsis, 1921, p. 5.

[82] Mikhail Stepanovich Olminskii (Aleksandrov), 1863–1933; for his biography see *Granat* (7), Vol. XL1, Part 2, cols. 82–5.

[83] *Izvestiia*, 23 Oct. 1918.

[84] Writing subsequently in *Izvestiia* of 15 Dec. 1918, Peters revealed that two Vecheka women employees had been executed for selling Vecheka blank documents and for misusing Vecheka food ration cards.

[85] *Izvestiia*, 29 Oct. 1918.

[86] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 178, item 321 dated 7 Sept. 1918.

[87] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 173–4, speech on 7 Nov. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 211–12).

[88] Nicolaevsky, 1965, p. 232, footnote. For Iakov Zinovievich Vorobev, 1885–1919, see App. B.

[89] *Pravda*, 21 Jan. 1919.

[90] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 132–3.

[91] Krylenko, 1924, p. 97.

CHAPTER VII

[1] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 1: 15, adopted 28 Oct. 1917, published in *Gazeta VRiKP*, 30 Oct. 1917.

[2] Gorodetskii, p. 316, citing *Vestnik otdela mestnogo upravleniia Komissariata vnutrennikh del*, No. 2, 8 Jan. 1918, p. 7, and *Vestnik Komissariata vnutrennukh del*, No. 5, 14 Feb. 1918, p. 14.

[3] Gorodetskii, p. 316, citing Tikhomirnov, 'O militsii', in *Vestnik Komissariata vnutrennikh del*, No. 11, 24 Apr. 1918, p. 11.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 317, citing *Vestnik Komissariata vnutrennikh del*, No. 17, 4 July 1918, pp. 1–5.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 317, citing *Vestnik Narodnogo Komissariata vnutrennikh del*, No. 20, 25 Aug. 1918, p. 2. See also *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 26, 20 Nov. 1918, p. 8.

[6] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 75: 813, *Izvestiia*, 13, 15, 17, Oct. 1918. See also *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 26, 20 Nov. 1918, p. 8.

[7] *Vestnik Narodnogo Komissariata vnutrennikh del*, No. 24, 28 Oct. 1918, pp. 8–9.

[8] Belov, pp. 137–8. For further detail see end of Chapter II.

[9] *Polozhenie o ChK na mestakh*, 11 June 1918, pp. 19–20.

[10] Maier, pp. 80–1.

[11] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 2, 29 Sept. 1918, pp. 3–4.

[12] *Polozhenie o ChK na mestakh*, 11 June 1918, p. 17, paragraph 2.

[13] *Vestnik Narodnogo Komissariata vnutrennikh del*, No. 20, 25 Aug. 1918, pp. 9–12.

[14] *Izvestiia*, 28 Aug. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 174–6).

[15] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, p. 10.

[16] *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, 4 Sept. 1918.

[17] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 65: 710, *Izvestiia*, 10 Sept. 1918. For text see Chapter VI.

[18] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 66: 728, *Izvestiia*, 14 Sept. 1918 (text in Belov, p. 194).

[19] See 'Polozhenie Kontrolno-Revizionnoi Kollegii pri Chrezvychainoi Komissii po borbe s kontrrevoliutsiei i spekuliatsiei' in *Organizatsiia ChK, 1918*, p. 37.

[20] *Polozhenie o ChK na mestakh*, 11 June 1918, pp. 23–4, paragraphs 31–3.

[21] *Izvestiia*, 29 Sept. 1918 (text in Belov, p. 199).

[22] *Ibid.*, 22 Sept. 1918. See Chapter VI.

[23] Latsis, 1921, p. 57.

[24] *Izvestiia*, 3 Oct. 1918 (text in Belov, p. 200).

[25] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 3, 6 Oct. 1918, pp. 4–5.

[26] *Ibid.*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, p. 21.

[27] *Pravda*, 18 Oct. 1918. Reprinted in *Vestnik Narodnogo Komissariata vnutrennikh del*, No. 24, 28 Oct. 1918, pp. 30–1.

[28] *Izvestiia*, 20 Oct. 1918. A selection of Soviet executive committees' replies was published in *Vestnik Narodnogo Komissariata vnutrennikh del*, No. 23, 20 Oct. 1918, and No. 24, 28 Oct. 1918. *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 26, 20 Nov. 1918, pp. 17–19, published Tikhomirnov's summary of results of this referendum.

[29] Belov, p. 480; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 112, *note*.

[30] Dzerzhinskaia, 1965, pp. 266–70; Zubov, 1971, pp. 220–1; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 265. Dzerzhinsky had used the Polish alias (Józef) Domański before, in 1911, for underground revolutionary work—see Khatskevich, 1965, p. 109; see also Zubov, 1971, p. 220.

[31] Senn, p. 100.

[32] *BSE* (3), Vol. I (1970), p. 47, col. 116.

[33] *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. I, p. 36.

[34] Senn, p. 100.

[35] Zubov, 1965, p. 194; Voroshilov, p. 85.

[36] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 114.

[37] Dzerzhinskaia, 1965, pp. 267–71. On 12 Nov. 1918, the Soviet diplomatic mission was expelled from Switzerland, but Sofia Sigizmundovna stayed on—see Senn, p. 171; she arrived in Moscow on 1 Feb. 1919—see Dzerzhinskaia, 1965, p. 276.

[38] Belov, p. 200, refers to Peters as Vecheka Deputy Chairman at this time.

[39] For details of the 'Lockhart case', see Chapter XIII.

[40] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 3, 6 Oct. 1918, pp. 7–8.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[42] Drabkina, pp. 461–2.

[43] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 112, citing Central Committee minutes of 25 Oct. 1918.

[44] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. III, p. 451; *Izvestiia*, 26 Oct. 1918.
[45] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, p. 3.
[46] Belov, p. 230.
[47] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 111, citing Central Committee minutes of 25 Oct. 1918.
[48] *Protokoly, VIII sezd RKP(b), note* on p. 515; *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. III, pp. 450–1; *Izvestiia*, 26 Oct. 1918.
[49] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 80: 842, signed on 28 Oct. 1918 by Sverdlov, as VTsIK Chairman; *Izvestiia*, 2 Nov. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 203–4).
[50] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, pp. 113–14; see Chapter III.
[51] Krylenko, 1924, p. 100.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 97.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[54] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 112.
[55] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. III, pp. 450–1; *Izvestiia*, 26 Oct. 1918.
[56] *Kontrolno-revizionnaia komissiia*; not to be confused with the Vecheka's *kontrolno-revizionnaia kollegiia*, whose formation was announced in *Izvestiia* on 29 Sept. 1918—see above.
[57] Belov, p. 480, see under 2 Nov. 1918. See also Alidin *et al.*, pp. 107, 110.
[58] Hollis, p. 524, citing *Izvestiia*, 4 Feb. 1919.
[59] Belov, p. 211, quoting *Izvestiia*, 6 Nov. 1918.
[60] Belov, p. 214, citing *TsGAOR, fond 393*. Latsis sat on the collegia of both services.
[61] Belov, pp. 214–16.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 228.
[63] *Instruktsiia Chrezvychainym Komissiiam na mestakh*, 1 Dec. 1918, copy in the B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford.
[64] The rights and duties of these supervisory collegia were specified in a separate instruction which is not available.
[65] In a further order, dated 19 Dec. 1918, the Vecheka requested its local Chekas to remind their relevant Party and Soviet committees to co-operate in instantly forming such standing supervisory collegia—see Belov, p. 238.
[66] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. IV, p. 571, footnote.
[67] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, pp. 225–6 (text in Belov, pp. 232–3); see also comment in Nikolaevskii, 1959, p. 171.
[68] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. IV, pp. 569–71. This Vecheka department had probably developed out of the Supervision and Inspection Collegium established in late September at Bolshaia Lubianka 14—see above.
[69] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 91–2: 924, signed 30 Nov. 1918.
[70] Belov, p. 232, footnote.
[71] Trotskii, 1920, *passim*.
[72] Nikolaevskii, 1959, p. 171.
[73] *Ibid.*, 1958, p. 55.
[74] For a further account of Bukharin's position regarding the Vecheka, see Chapter VIII.
[75] Nikolaevskii, 1958, p. 55; *ibid.*, 1959, pp. 171–2.
[76] Nettl, Vol. II, p. 698.
[77] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 145.
[78] Nikolaevskii, 1958, p. 55. See also Chapter VIII.
[79] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 1.
[80] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 73.
[81] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 1: 14, adopted by the VTsIK Presidium on 20 Jan. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 243–4); *Izvestiia* and *Pravda*, 24 Jan. 1919.
[82] Golinkov, 1978, Vol. II, p. 348, reports the Vecheka's decision, taken on 7 Jan. 1919, to abolish the District Chekas.
[83] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, p. 271.
[84] Sofinov, p. 138, *note*. As at Apr. 1919, sixty District Chekas remained in existence—see *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 5, Apr. 1919, p. 16.

[85] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 192.

[86] Latsis, 1921, p. 28; Sofinov, p. 138.

[87] Dmitri Ivanovich Kurskii (1874–1932) had deputised for the originally designated People's Commissar for Justice, G. I. Oppokov (A. Lomov), who never took office (see Iroshnikov, pp. 50–1), until, on 16 Nov. 1917, Stuchka was appointed Acting Deputy Commissar (see *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 583). Stuchka functioned as *de facto* Justice Commissar until Steinberg's appointment on 12 Dec. 1917. Upon Steinberg's departure in mid-March 1918, Stuchka became Justice Commissar *de jure*. On 4 Sept. 1918, Kurskii in turn succeeded Stuchka, holding the post of People's Commissar for Justice in the RSFSR from 1918 to 1928. (For biographical details, see *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 253; Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, p. 780.) Petr Ivanovich Stuchka (1865–1932), Latvian, late 1918–1919 Chairman of short-lived Latvian Soviet Government; 1921–3 RSFSR Deputy People's Commissar for Justice; 1923–32 Chairman of RSFSR Supreme Court; represented Latvian Communist Party in the Comintern. (For biographical details, see *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part III, cols. 128–9; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 528; Gorodetskii, p. 327, *note*; *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 448–50.)

[88] *Materialy NKIu*, Vypusk III, pp. 13–17 (text partially published in translation in Bunyan & Fisher, 1934, pp. 580–1).

[89] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, pp. 113–14. See Chapter III.

[90] The NKIu's instructions to its representative (an NKIu Collegium member) who was deputed to supervise the legality of the Vecheka's activities, figure in Kozhevnikov, pp. 106–7.

[91] Krylenko, 1924, p. 100.

[92] *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1.

[93] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 252–3, citing *TsPA IML, fond 17.*

[94] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 132–3.

[95] Krylenko, 1924, pp. 94, 97–100.

[96] *Ibid.*, pp. 322–5. The Congress's last point was met in the Vecheka's 'Instruction to Local Extraordinary Commissions', adopted by the Second Conference of Chekas in late November and issued on 1 Dec. 1918, which endeavoured to remedy the duplication and conflict prevailing between the Revolutionary Tribunals and local Chekas over the detention, investigation, and sentencing of prisoners—see *Instruktsiia Chrezvychainym Komissiiam na mestakh*, 1 Dec. 1918, p. 10, paragraphs 39–43.

[97] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 90: 908, 8 Nov. 1918; *Izvestiia*, 6 Dec. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 212–13).

[98] Latsis was prominent at this time in defence of the Chekas—see his articles in *Izvestiia* of 21 and 22 Jan. 1919 complaining that many Communists were now disowning the Chekas and were recommending their replacement by Revolutionary Tribunals.

[99] Nikolai Vasilevich Krylenko (1885–1938): 1904 joined Bolshevik Party; 12 Nov. 1917 appointed C.-in-C. Soviet Armed Forces; March 1918 transferred to legal field, organised Revolutionary Tribunal system; 1918–31 state prosecutor in major political cases; 1922–31 variously Chairman of Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal of VTsIK, People's Deputy Commissar for Justice, and Deputy (later full) Prosecutor of the RSFSR; 1931 RSFSR People's Commissar for Justice; 1936 USSR People's Commissar for Justice: perished in purges;—see *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, cols. 237–46; *BSE* (1), Vol. XXXV (1937), cols. 273–4; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, pp. 320–1; N. V. Krylenko, 1964, pp. 3–21.

[100] *Izvestiia*, 25 Jan. 1919.

[101] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 170.

[102] *Ibid.*

[103] V. I. Savinov, a member of the Vecheka Supervision and Inspection Collegium since Sept./Oct. 1918 (see *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 3, 6 Oct. 1918, p. 2), was evidently a Vecheka Collegium member in 1919 (see Tsybov and Chistiakov, group photograph facing p. 22). His photograph figures in Belov, p. 377.

[104] Krylenko, 1923, pp. 507–25; Scott, pp. 17–18 citing *Pravda*, 14–18 Feb. 1919. See also Solzhenitsyn, 1974, pp. 314–22.

[105] *Izvestiia*, 28 Jan. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 245–6).

[106] The letter had been approved by the Central Committee on 3 Feb.—see Belov, p. 232, footnote. On 4 Feb. the Central Committee continued to discuss Vecheka affairs, and decided to restrict the Vecheka's powers—see below.

[107] *Izvestiia*, 8 Feb. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 248–50).

[108] According to Tishkov, p. 57, Dzerzhinsky chaired the commission.

[109] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. IV, p. 402, footnote. Additionally, Lenin (5), Vol. XXXVII, p. 729, states that the Cheka issue was debated by the Central Committee, with Lenin present, on both 4 and 5 February. For discussion of the significance of this Central Committee debate, see Leggett, 1980, pp. 132–7.

[110] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. IV, p. 402, footnote.

[111] Belov, pp. 251–7.

[112] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 12: 130, 17 Feb. 1919, *Izvestiia*, 21 Feb. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 258–9).

[113] Belov, pp. 299–301.

[114] Carr, 'The Origin and Status of The Cheka', p. 8.

[115] Belov, p. 257.

[116] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 22–23: 115, *Izvestiia*, 27 Mar. 1920 (relevant extracts in Belov, pp. 379–82).

[117] Belov, pp. 382–8.

[118] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 114.

[119] *Khlebnaia volost.*

[120] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 144. This decree may not have been enacted.

[121] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. IV, pp. 626–7; see also pp. 256–7.

[122] *Ibid.*, pp. 510–11, 17 Mar. 1919.

[123] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 8–9; *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, pp. 21–2.

[124] Latsis, 1920, p. 76. However, according to Latsis in *Izvestiia* of 6 Feb. 1920, the Chekas took 4,068 hostages in 1918 and 5,491 in 1919.

[125] Sofinov, p. 194.

[126] *Shestoi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, p. 7; *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 100: 1033, 6 Nov. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 206–7).

[127] *S.U.R* 1918, No. 94: 941, *Izvestiia*, 14 Dec. 1918. (*Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. IV, p. 208, gives date of decree as 11 Dec. 1918).

[128] Belov, pp. 236–8, quoting *Prikaz No. 113 mestnym chrezvychainym komissiiam ob izmenenii i uluchshenii metodov ikh raboty*, 19 Dec. 1918.

[129] For instance, the Samara Cheka arrested all the personnel, over 200 in number, of the Administration of Irrigation Work expedition to Turkestan, and only released them, on 5 Oct. 1918, upon orders from Moscow. An investigation revealed no evidence to subversive activity among those arrested, and, as a result of severe censure by the local Party organisation, the Chekists responsible were forced to resign—see *Izvestiia*, 18 Dec. 1918, 20 Dec. 1918, and 2 Mar. 1919.

[130] Vecheka Presidium order No. 208, 17 Dec. 1919, quoted in Belov, pp. 345–7. Also in Latsis, 1921, p. 55. An incomplete translation figures in Bunyan, 1936, pp. 265–6, but dating the document 17 Dec. 1918.

[131] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 47: 458, *Izvestiia*, 26 Sept. 1919.

[132] *Prikaz Prezidiuma VChK*, 28 Feb. 1920 (text in Belov, pp. 374–5).

[133] *Entsiklopediia gosudarstva i prava*, Vypusk 2, Moscow, 1925, cols. 1161–3.

[134] Belov, p. 481; Tishkov, p. 59; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 260, citing *TsPA IML, fond 17.*

[135] Tsvigun *et al.*, pp. 207–8.

[136] *Ibid.*, p. 208. For M. F. Vladimirskii, 1874–1951, see *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 587–8. It is interesting to note, in this context, that in January 1919 Stalin suggested a merger of the Vecheka with the NKVD, a proposal which Dzerzhinsky successfully opposed at that time—see Tsvigun *et al.*, pp. 232–3.

[137] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 260.

[138] Rigby, p. 67.
[139] *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 5, Apr. 1919, pp. 15–16.
[140] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 13: 133, 3 Apr. 1919, *Izvestiia*, 6 Apr. 1919.
[141] M. Vasilev, 'Krasnaia Militsiia' in *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 11, Oct. 1919, p. 7.
[142] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, p. 116.
[143] See Chapter III, and Koval, *passim*, but especially pp. 33, 45, 57–63.
[144] In this respect the Vecheka had set a precedent in Nov. 1918, in Moscow, by putting a Chekist, A. M. Trepalov, in charge of the city's recently established criminal investigation administration—see Koval, p. 49.
[145] Belov, pp. 293–4, citing *TsGAOR, Kollektsiia dokumentov po istorii VChK.*
[146] *Ibid.*, p. 295.
[147] *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 8–9, June–Aug. 1919, p. 28.
[148] *Ibid.*, No. 10, Sept. 1919, pp. 25–6.
[149] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 64: 578; *Izvestiia*, 12 Dec. 1919.
[150] Kizilov, pp. 54–5.
[151] *Tsentralnaia kollegiia po delam plennykh i bezhentsev.*
[152] *Otdel prinuditelnykh rabot.* See Chapter IX.
[153] *Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei*—Main Administration of Camps.
[154] Kizilov, pp. 54–5.
[155] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 34: 451, *Izvestiia*, 27 Apr. 1918.
[156] Kizilov, p. 38.
[157] *Ibid.*, pp. 84–5.
[158] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 24: 279, 24 May 1919, *Izvestiia*, 27 May 1919.
[159] Latsis, 1925, p. 150.
[160] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 17, 25.
[161] *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18, 25.
[162] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[163] *Sedmoi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, pp. 60–3.
[164] *Ibid.*, pp. 75–80.
[165] *Komissariat Gosudarstvennogo Kontrolia.*
[166] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 6: 91–2, 5 Dec. 1917, published 6 Dec. 1917.
[167] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 30: 393, *Izvestiia*, 22 Mar. 1918.
[168] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 12: 122, *Izvestiia*, 12 Apr. 1919.
[169] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 16: 94, dated 7 Feb. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 8 Feb. 1920.
[170] Carr, 1950, pp. 226–8.
[171] *Spisok otdelov narodnogo komissariata gosudarstvennogo kontrolia s ukazaniem funktsii*, Moscow, 1920.
[172] *RSFSR. Kratkii otchet o deiatelnosti narodnogo Komissariata Raboche-krestianskoi inspektsii za 1921 god (po 1-e dekabria)*, Moscow, 1921, p. 3.
[173] *Interim Report of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia*, 1920, pp. 18–23, quoting from *Izvestiia Raboche-Krestianskoi Inspektsii*, April 1920.
[174] Belov, p. 247, citing *TsGAOR, fond 1235.*

CHAPTER VIII

[1] Menzhinsky, in *Pravda*, 20 July 1927.
[2] Fainsod, 1963, pp. 178–9. But, for Stalin, see Daniels, 1960, p. 112.
[3] Schapiro, 1970, p. 244, citing Lenin (2/3), Vol. XXV, p. 112.
[4] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. II, p. 401.
[5] Zubov, 1971, p. 421.
[6] Belov, p. 400.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 266.
[8] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 260.
[9] Belov, p. 400.
[10] Sofinov, p. 208, citing Dzerzhinsky's letter of 21 July 1920 to the All-Ukrainian Cheka.

[11] Sofinov, p. 130.
[12] Belov, p. 197, citing *Arkhiv IML pri TsK KPSS, fond 17.*
[13] Sofinov, p. 139.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 180, citing *TsPA IML pri TsK KPSS, fond 76.*
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[16] Sofinov, p. 203.
[17] Belov, pp. 112–13, 116–17, 183.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 347–9..
[20] *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, Vypusk II, 1922, p. 178 (text in Belov, pp. 437–8).
[21] *Izvestiia*, 19 and 30 May 1918.
[22] *Ibid.*, 16 June 1918.
[23] *Ibid.*, 28 Aug. 1918 (text in Belov, top of p. 176).
[24] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 2, 29 Sept. 1918, p. 12.
[25] *Ibid.*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, pp. 30–1.
[26] *Instruktsiia Chrezvychainym Komissiiam na mestakh*, 1 Dec. 1918, p. 1.
[27] Belov, p. 233, citing *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXI, pp. 225–6.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 347–9.
[29] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 181.
[30] Belov, p. 361—Dzerzhinsky's speech on 3 Feb. 1920 at Fourth Conference of Chekas.
[31] Belov, p. 295.
[32] Rogozhin and Maimeskulov, p. 37.
[33] Maimeskulov *et al.*, p. 64.
[34] Latsis, 1921, pp. 11–12. The Ukrainian Politburo similarly decided, on 19 Oct. 1920, that there should be a constant rotation of Ukrainian Cheka staff, those with long service to be replaced by fresh personnel—see Rogozhin and Maimeskulov, p. 36.
[35] Bukharin, 'Proletarskii Iakobinets', in *Feliks Dzerzhinskii, 1926–1931*, p. 143.
[36] Unsigned article 'Ia. G. Bliumkin rasstrelian Stalinym', immediately following a signed article by Trotsky, in *Biulleten oppozitsii*, No. 9, Feb.–Mar. 1930, p. 8; Trotsky was the *Bulletin*'s editor, and must at least have approved the unsigned article, though more probably he wrote it, judging by its content. Agabekov (1930, p. 19) similarly stated that the OGPU, though formally subordinated to the Sovnarkom, took its orders from the Politburo.
[37] Schapiro, 1970, p. 647.
[38] Nikolaevskii, 1958, p. 55. There is a seeming chronological contradiction here: Lenin could not have subordinated the Vecheka to the Politburo before mid-March 1919, when the Politburo was first created, yet Lenin's rejection of the proposal to abolish the Vecheka (at which moment, according to Bukharin, Lenin decided on the Vecheka's subordination to the Politburo) almost certainly occurred either in January 1919 (following Kamenev's abolition recommendation of 8 January) or in the first days of February, when the Party's Central Committee decided (on 3 February) to defend the Vecheka publicly in *Izvestia*, and further decided (on 4 February) to curtail radically the powers of the Chekas—as described in Chapter VII. Maybe, however, Bukharin was inexact in his statement: perhaps Lenin appointed Bukharin in January or February to act as the Central Committee's watchdog in the Vecheka's Collegium, and in March to be the Politburo's representative there.
[39] Nicolaevsky, 1965, p. 18; see also Cohen, p. 100. Cohen (p. 82) suggests that Bukharin 'played a special role within the Politburo. ... He apparently assumed, or was delegated, the role of Politburo trouble-shooter and righter of wrongs: he turned up constantly as the leadership's representative in troublesome situations: on a commission to combat anti-Semitism, at the Cheka to investigate questionable arrests of 'bourgeois intellectuals' and at the trade unions when the party's labour relations became strained.'
[40] Letters written by B. I. Nicolaevsky, dated 16 May 1958 and 12 July 1958. Rozanov was arrested in late July 1919 and, although sentenced to death, was spared in

late September, when sixty-seven National Centre conspirators were executed by order of the Vecheka—see *Pravda*, 23 Sept. 1919. Rozanov subsequently figured among accused members of the Tactical Centre, whose case was heard on 16–20 Aug. 1920 before a Revolutionary Tribunal; he was sentenced to detention in a concentration camp until the end of the Civil War—see Belov, pp. 402, 407.

[41] Bukharin, 'Proletarskii Iakobinets', pp. 140–3; 'Mech proletarskoi revoliutsii', pp. 186–90; 'Na fronte transporta', pp. 219–24; 'U rulia promyshlennosti', pp. 265–7; 'Geroicheskaia pesn', pp. 334–40, in *Feliks Dzerzhinskii, 1926–1931*.

[42] Conquest, 1971, pp. 724, 812, citing *Pravda*, 18 Dec. 1927.

[43] For a discussion of Bukharin's ambivalent attitude towards terror—see Hook, pp. 88–90.

[44] Medvedev, p. 183.

[45] Kamenev remained outside Russia from January to August 1918—see *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 167.

[46] *Shestoi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, p. 7.

[47] Lenin (5), Vol. LI, pp. 47 (item 80), 385 (*note* 42).

[48] Nikolaevskii, 1959, p. 171.

[49] *Biulleten oppozitsii*, No. 11, May 1930, pp. 10–11.

[50] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 119.

[51] Trotskii, 1920, *Terrorizm i kommunizm*, Petersburg (*sic*).

[52] Trotsky, 1938, p. 7; Katkov, 1959, p. 35.

[53] Belov, p. 241.

[54] Sofinov, pp. 134–8; Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 267–70.

[55] Tishkov, pp. 54–5; Sofinov, pp. 139–40.

[56] Erickson, pp. 45, 58.

[57] Belov, pp. 280–1, citing *TsGAOR, Kollektsiia dokumentov po istorii VChK*.

[58] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, p. 571.

[59] Nikolaevskii, 1958, p. 55; Nikolaevskii's letter of 12 July 1958 states Bukharin relinquished his Vecheka Collegium attachment in 1920. See also Souvarine, p. 289.

[60] Trotsky, 1969, Vol. II, pp. 111–12. For Pavlunovskii's report on the Vecheka Special Department (OO)'s arrest on 8 July 1919 of Red Army Staff Officers suspected of treasonable complicity with Vatsetis (but, like him, subsequently exonerated), see *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 236–7.

[61] Smith, 1967, *The Young Stalin*, pp. 370–5.

[62] Trotsky, 1930, pp. 382–3.

[63] Malkov, 1959, pp. 148–9.

[64] Khatskevich, 1970, p. 284, citing *Lenin v Moskve*, Moscow, 1958, p. 138.

[65] See, for example, *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 167.

[66] Unshlikht, p. 96. Cf. Uralov, 1968, p. 69.

[67] The Malinovskii affair is treated extensively in Wolfe, 1966, pp. 596–620. It has been suggested (e.g. by Anin, pp. 151–2) that perhaps Lenin realised that Malinovskii was an Okhrana agent, but calculated that, even so, his usefulness to the Bolshevik cause outweighed his potentiality for harm.

[68] Lenin (5), Vol. XI, p. 342, in Oct. 1905. See also Wolfe, 1965, pp. 69–73.

[69] Meijer, 1971, pp. 278–9.

[70] Numerous instances of such interventions are quoted in *Lenin i VChK, passim*, but especially between pp. 115–38.

[71] Lenin (5), Vol. L, pp. 153–4, 17 Aug. 1918.

[72] *Ibid.*, pp. 203–4 11 Nov. 1918 (text in Belov, p. 214).

[73] *Ibid.*, pp. 215–16, 6 Dec. 1918.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 242, 12 Jan. 1919.

[75] *Ibid.*, pp. 255, 470.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 318.

Leninskii Sbornik, Vol. XXXVII, p. 127.

[78] Liberman, pp. 14–15.

[79] See Ulam, p. 422. See also Chapter XI.

[80] Belov, pp. 370–1.

[81] Berkman, p. 90.

CHAPTER IX

[1] Latsis, 1921, p. 8.
[2] Bonch-Bruevich, 1930, p. 199.
[3] Lenin (2), Vol. XXVI, p. 339, cited in Carr, 1958, p. 73.
[4] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXVI, p. 163.
[5] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXVI, p. 217, first published in 1933.
[6] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 4: 50.
[7] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 12: 170.
[8] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 35: 471, 4 May 1918, *Izvestiia*, 17 May 1918.
[9] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 41: 520, 29 May 1918, *Izvestiia*, 9 June 1918.
[10] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 44: 533, *Izvestiia*, 16 June 1918.
[11] Kucherov, p. 55, quoting D. I. Kursky, 'The Fundamentals of a Revolutionary Court', *Materialy*, I, p. 60.
[12] Kucherov, p. 55, quoting N. V. Krylenko, *Sudoustroistvo*, p. 153, quoting Larin.
[13] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 9: 145.
[14] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 65: 710.
[15] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 1, 22 Sept. 1918, p. 8.
[16] Carr, 1959, pp. 422–3.
[17] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 12: 130, 17 Feb. 1919, *Izvestiia*, 21 Feb. 1919. See Chapter VII.
[18] Kizilov, p. 87; Beliaev *et al.*, p. 133.
[19] Beliaev *et al.*, p. 133.
[20] In 1920, in the Ukraine, Mensheviks were committed to concentration camp with forced labour for the duration of the Civil War—see Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 252. For a discussion of the three categories of prisoners in Lenin's Russia, see Dallin and Nicolaevsky, 1948, pp. 175–6.
[21] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 12: 170.
[22] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 19: 284.
[23] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 53: 598.
[24] Lenin (5), Vol. L, pp. 21, 407–8.
[25] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXV, p. 176.
[26] *Ibid.*, Vol. L, p. 70.
[27] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 35: 467, 8 May 1918, *Izvestiia*, 12 May 1918.
[28] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 54: 605, 22 July 1918, *Izvestiia*, 25 July 1918.
[29] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. V, p. 69.
[30] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 12: 124, *Izvestiia*, 15 Apr. 1919.
[31] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. V, p. 174.
[32] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 20: 235, *Izvestiia*, 17 May 1919.
[33] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 18, 215.
[34] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 20: 235, *Izvestiia*, 17 May 1919.
[35] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 22–23: 115, 18 Mar. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 27 Mar. 1920.
[36] Kizilov, p. 89.
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p. 20, citing *TsGAOR, fond 393*. Kizilov, pp. 89–90, establishes that these were forced labour camps, under the NKVD, and not, as Solzhenitsyn seems to imply, concentration camps.
[39] Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p. 20. See also Malsagoff, pp. 48–9.
[40] *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik RSFSR, 1918–1920*, Vol. VIII, Vypusk 2, p. 58.
[41] Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p. 20, citing *TsGAOR, fond 393*; confirmed by Kizilov, pp. 89–90.
[42] *Vlast Sovetov*, 1922, No. 1–2, p. 41. However, *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik RSFSR, 1918–1920, op. cit.*, p. 58, gives 99 camps, with 35,703 inmates.
[43] *Vlast Sovetov*, 1922, No. 1–2, p. 41. The increase in prisoners may be due in part to the suppression of the Tambov Rebellion.
[44] *Ibid.* The rapid reduction in numbers of prisoners was presumably due to the high death rate resulting from appalling camp conditions—see Gerson, p. 149.

[45] Gerson, p. 149, citing *Vlast Sovetov*, 1922, No. 10, p. 66.
[46] *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik RSFSR, 1918–1920*, Vol. VIII, Vypusk 2, p. 59.
[47] *Vlast Sovetov*, 1922, No. 1–2, pp. 41–2.
[48] *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik RSFSR, 1918–1920, op. cit.*, p. 59.
[49] *Vlast Sovetov*, 1922, No. 1–2, p. 42.
[50] *Ibid.*, 1922, No. 11–12, p. 60. [51] See Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p.17.
[52] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 143. Geller, pp. 43–4, quotes Trotsky's orders of 4, 26 June and 8 August 1918, committing to concentration camps Czech Corps rebels, uncooperative Tsarist ex-officers, and other recalcitrant elements.
[53] *Izvestiia*, 3 Sept. 1918.
[54] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 65: 710, 5 Sept. 1918, *Izvestiia*, 10 Sept. 1918.
[55] Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p. 19, citing *Krasnaia gazeta*, Petrograd, 6 Sept. 1918.
[56] Solzhenitsyn, 1974, pp. 17–18; Carr, 1959, p. 425.
[57] Belov, pp. 256–7; Carr, 1959, pp. 425–6.
[58] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 12: 130, 17 Feb. 1919; *Izvestiia*, 21 Feb. 1919.
[59] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 56: 537, 14 Nov. 1919.
[60] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 470, *note* 292, mentions a specific case of Cheka committal to a concentration camp 'until the end of the war'.
[61] Belov, p. 421.
[62] Dallin and Nicolaevsky, 1948, pp. 156–7, citing M. Isayev, *Osnovy penitentiarnoi politiki*, Moscow, 1927, p. 101. Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p. 20, dates their abolition as occurring in 1922.
[63] Dallin and Nicolaevsky, 1948, p. 157; Solzhenitsyn, 1974, pp. 18–19.
[64] Malsagoff, pp. 51–6; Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p. 18; Cederholm, pp. 289–91; Dallin and Nicolaevsky, 1948, p. 173.
[65] Beliaev *et al.*, pp. 132–3.
[66] Malsagoff, pp. 44–5.
[67] For detailed descriptions of SLON conditions, see Dallin and Nicolaevsky, 1948, pp. 168–76; Cederholm, pp. 271–333; Klinger, pp. 157–210; Solzhenitsyn, 1974, pp. 29 ff.; Malsagoff, pp. 39 ff.
[68] Malsagoff, pp. 43, 46–51.
[69] Dallin and Nicolaevsky, 1948, pp. 169–75.
[70] Malsagoff, p. 45.
[71] Latsis, 1920, p. 76. The 'Total arrested' category included many who were released, as well as those executed, hence the discrepancies.
[72] The total of persons released is as given by Latsis, but the separate figures of those released in 1918 and 1919, which did not add up correctly in Latsis's computation, have been adjusted to fit in with Latsis's other figures.
[73] *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik RSFSR, 1918–1920*, Vol. VIII, Vypusk 2, p. 98.
[74] Gerson, pp. 172, 302, *note* 84, citing 'Tiuremnoe delo v 1920 godu: Otchet narodnogo komissariata iustitsii po tsentralnomu karatelnomu otdelu VIII-mu vserossiiskomu sezdu sovetov' in *Sbornik materialov tsentralnogo karatelnogo otdela*, no. 1, Moscow, 1920, pp. 113–30.
[75] Gerson, pp. 176, 303, *note* 90, citing 'Tiuremnoe delo v 1921 g.: Otchet narkomiusta, po tsentralnomu ispravitelno-trudovomu otdelu, IX-mu vser. sezdu sovetov', quoted in *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, no. 13–14, 20 July 1922, p. 8.
[76] *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik RSFSR, 1918–1920*, Vol. VIII, Vypusk 2, p. 89.
[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 92–3.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 94.
[79] Golinkov, 1978, Vol. II, p. 348.
[80] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 13: 131, *Izvestiia*, 12 Feb. 1919. See also *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 58: 549, 20 Nov. 1919, *Izvestiia*, 27 Nov. 1919.
[81] Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 144–5, reproduces the relevant *Revvoensovet* instruction.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 164.
[83] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 21: 112, 18 Mar. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 27 Mar. 1920.
[84] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 22–23: 115, 18 Mar. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 27 Mar. 1920.

[85] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 12: 130, 17 Feb. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 258–9). But already on 14 Mar. 1919 the Party's Central Committee accepted Dzerzhinsky's proposal to place under martial law all localities affected by insurrections—see *Lenin i VChK*, p. 169.

[86] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 272–3.

[87] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 27: 301, 20 June 1919, *Izvestiia*, 22 June 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 299–300).

[88] Belov, pp. 300–1, citing *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 8–9, 1919.

[89] Text in Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. 1, pp. 284–5.

[90] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 277.

[91] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 4–5: 22, 17 Jan. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 22 Jan. 1920 (text in Belov, pp. 356–7).

[92] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 55–9.

[93] Krylenko, 1924, p. 356, reproducing an extract from the minutes of the VTsIK Presidium's session of 28 Jan. 1920. *Izvestiia*, 5 Feb. 1920 (cited in Maximoff, p. 121), let the cat out of the bag, disclosing that the Vecheka had informed the Kiev Provincial Cheka that, since it was located in the military front zone, it was exempt from the application of the decree abolishing the death penalty. In any event, on 2 Feb. 1920 the death penalty was restored in the Ukraine with regard to 'active counter-revolutionaries'—see Bachinskii, p. 139.

[94] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. VII, pp. 253–4.

[95] Vishniak, p. 22, quoting the text of Vecheka Circular No. 325/16.756 of 15 Apr. 1920. *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 217, confirms that as at Jan. 1920 Yagoda was administrator of the Vecheka Special Department. For Genrikh Grigorevich Yagoda, 1891-1938, see App. B.

[96] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 59–60.

[97] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 43: 190, 11 May 1920, *Izvestiia*, 12 May 1920.

[98] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 78: 370, 28 May 1920, *Izvestiia*, 29 May 1920 (text in Belov, pp. 395–6).

[99] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 51: 294, 23 June 1921, *Izvestiia*, 28 June 1921 (text partially in Belov, pp. 440–2).

[100] Melgounov, 1925, p. 54. Sergei P. Melg(o)unov, 1880–1956, was leader of the non-radical People's Socialist Party.

[101] Chernov, p. 227.

[102] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 89: 454.

[103] Lenin (5), Vol. XLI, p. 383, written in Oct. 1920.

[104] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXVII, pp..129–30.

[105] *Shestoi vs. sezd Sovetov*, pp. 13–14; *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 90: 908, *Izvestiia*, 6 Dec. 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 212–13).

[106] Tikunov, p. 22.

[107] Latsis, 1921, pp. 11–12.

[108] *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, No. 1, 1958, pp. 5–6, citing *TsGAOR, Kollektsiia dokumentov F. E. Dzerzhinskogo.*

[109] Tikunov, p. 22.

[110] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 155.

[111] Tikunov, p. 19 (text of July 1918 memorandum in Belov, pp. 165–6).

[112] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[113] Belov, p. xi.

[114] *Ibid.*, pp. 374–5.

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 422, Dzerzhinsky's letter of 19 Jan. 1921 to his deputy, Ksenofontov.

[116] *Izvestiia*, 27 Aug. 1919, quoted in Belov, pp. 314–16.

[117] Latsis, 1926, p. 91. For instances of severe punishment of Chekists, see Peters, 1927, 'Bolshaia Lubianka 2'.

[118] Peters, 1924, pp. 10–11.

[119] Latsis, 1926, p. 84.

[120] Serge, pp. 80–1. Victor Serge (pseudonym of Viktor Lvovich Kibalchich), 1890–1947, born in Belgium of Russian parents, active in France as an Anarchist, went

to Russia in 1919 and worked there for the Communist International; imprisoned 1933–6.

[121] *Ibid.*, pp. 81–2. For Ivan Petrovich Bakaev, 1887–1936, see App. B.

[122] Berkman, p. 145.

[123] *Pravda*, 25 and 26 Dec. 1918.

[124] Latsis, 1921, p. 11.

[125] See Chapter VI. Among senior Chekists who proved to be ex-criminals were Kosyrev (reported in Chapter VII) and, reputedly, E. G. Evdokimov (see in App. B).

[126] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 4, 13 Oct. 1918, p. 6.

[127] *Izvestiia*, 28 Nov. 1918, quoted by Sofinov, p. 124.

[128] Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 71–2.

[129] Belov, p. 264, quoting *Izvestiia*, 14 Mar. 1919.

[130] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 72.

[131] Solzhenitsyn, 1974, pp. 11–12.

[132] Dan, pp. 214–15; Abramovich, 1956, Vol. II, p. 291.

[133] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 51: 582, paragraph 65.

[134] Latsis, 1921, p. 17.

[135] Belov, p. 217.

[136] *Izvestiia Tsaritsynskoi Gubernskoi Chrezvychainoi Komissii*, No. 1, Nov. 1918, pp. 32–5.

[137] Latsis, 1921, p. 53.

[138] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 5, 20 Oct. 1918, p. 25. But see Smith, 1967, '*The Okhrana*', p. 74, item 160.

[139] Berkman, p. 251.

[140] Chernov, pp. 54–5.

[141] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[142] Belov, p. 285.

[143] *Interim Report of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia*, 1920, p. 4.

[144] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[145] Belov, p. 276. For a professional account of the search and arrest procedure, see 'Chekist o Ch.K.' in *Na chuzhoi storone*, IX, 1925, pp. 122–6.

[146] *Interim Report of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia*, 1920, pp. 18, 20, quoting *Izvestiia Raboche-Krestianskoi Inspektsii*, April 1920.

[147] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 12: 130, 17 Feb. 1919, *Izvestiia*, 21 Feb. 1919.

[148] Carr, 'The Origin and Status of the Cheka', p. 8.

[149] *Interim Report of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia*, 1920, pp. 8–10.

[150] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[151] Chernov, pp. 55, 157; Ivanov-Razumnik, p. 40; Dumbadze, 1930, p. 90.

[152] Kolbasina, 'Baronessa' in *Volia Rossii*, No. 4, 30 Jan. 1922, pp. 5–9.

[153] Kolbasina, 'Nina i Niura' in *Volia Rossii*, No. 10, 11 Mar. 1922, pp. 9–15. *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR, 22 Jan. 1920*, p. 262, indeed shows V. M. Nikolaev as a member of the M-Cheka Collegium.

[154] Dumbadze, pp. 48–50; Ivanov-Razumnik, p. 48; Bezpalov, pp. 12, 19–20.

[155] The texts of such undertakings figure in *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 142, and in *Kreml za reshetkoi*, pp. 219–20.

[156] Viktorov, pp. 63 ff; Sofinov, p. 172; Chernov, p. 57; Berkman, p. 253.

[157] Viktorov, pp. 63 ff; Berkman, pp. 58–9, 170.

[158] *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik*, No. 23–24 (45/46), 1922, p. 18.

[159] Myagkov, pp. 47–8.

[160] *Interim Report of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia*, 1920, p. 6; Ivanov-Razumnik, p. 35.

[161] *Mémorandum présenté par la Délégation du Parti SR*, 2 Apr. 1922, p. 15.

[162] Bezpalov, p. 20.

[163] Chernov, p. 58.

[164] *Mémorandum présenté par la Délégation du Parti SR*, 2 Apr. 1922, p. 15.

[165] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 159–60.

[166] *Ibid.*, pp. 160–1; Berkman, pp. 165–6; Chernov, pp. 58, 231.

[167] *Interim Report of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia*, 1920, p. 7; 'Chekist o Ch.K.', p. 134; Melgounov, 1925, pp. 182–3; Chernov, pp. 58, 231.

[168] 'Chekist o Ch.K', pp. 130–1.

[169] 'Materialy i dokumenty iz deiatelnosti Ch.K. (po dannym Denikinskoi komissii)', in *Na chuzhoi storone*, 1924, Vol. 1V, pp. 205–12.

[170] Wolin and Slusser, pp. 36–7, *note* 25.

[171] *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 29, 1918, pp. 11–12.

[172] 'Chekist o Ch.K.', pp. 130–1.

[173] Krylenko, 1924, p. 97; Wolin and Slusser, pp. 36–7.

[174] Peters, 1927, 'Bolshaia Lubianka 2'.

[175] Melgounov, 1925, p. 187.

[176] 'Chekist o Ch.K.', pp. 120, 133–4, 129–30; Chernov, pp. 25–7; *Denikin Commission Report concerning Tsaritsyn*, pp. 27, 34.

[177] *Denikin Commission Report concerning Kharkov*, 1919, p. 153.

[178] *Goneniia na Anarkhizm v Sovetskoi Rossii*, p. 303.

[179] *Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia*, H.M.S.O., 1919, p. 26.

[180] A translation from *Krasnyi Terror v Rossii 1918–1923*, Berlin, 1924.

[181] *Osobaia Komissiia po rassledovaniiu zlodeianii bolshevikov, sostoiashchaia pri Glavnokomanduiushchem Vooruzhennymi Silami na Iuge Rossii.*

[182] All the above examples are quoted from Melgounov, 1925, pp. 178–83.

[183] *Ibid.*, p. 177; *Bulletin of the Russian Liberation Committee*, No. 40, 22 Nov. 1919, p. 4. Fomin, 1964, p. 54, confirms the presence of a Chinese Cheka unit in Kiev.

[184] Averbukh, p. 32.

[185] *Ibid.*, pp. 33–7.

[186] Chernov, p. 229.

[187] *Ibid.*, pp. 217–19; Melgounov, 1925, pp. 214–19; Reswick, pp. 46–7.

[188] Chernov, pp. 72, 149; Melgounov, 1925, pp. 18, 19, 65.

[189] Melgounov, 1925, p. 196.

[190] Peshekhonov, p. 213.

[191] Alinin, p. 45; Averbukh, pp. 24–5, 31.

[192] Alinin, p. 45. A typical execution routine is described in a haunting poem, 'Terror', written in 1921 in the Crimea by Alexander Voloshin—see Vladimir Markov and Merrill Sparks (editors), *Modern Russian Poetry: An Anthology with Verse Translations*, London, 1966, pp. 518–19.

[193] Alinin, p. 45; Steinberg, 1935, pp. 235–6.

[194] *Interim Report of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia*, 1920, p. 11.

[195] *Ibid.*, p. 12; Alinin, pp. 28, 45; Melgounov, 1925, p. 74.

[196] Chernov, pp. 142–3.

[197] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[198] *Denikin Commission Report concerning Kharkov*, p. 151.

[199] *Ibid.*, p. 161 ff. See also Alinin, pp. 61–3.

[200] Melgounov, 1925, p. 175; cf. Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 83, *note* 16. Kiev fell to the Whites on 31 Aug. 1919.

[201] Alinin, p. 45.

[202] Chernov, pp. 227–8, 236. Cf. Melgounov, 1925, pp. 71–3; Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 83, *note* 16. For Georgii Aleksandrovich Atarbekov, 1891–1925, see App. B.

[203] Dumbadze, pp. 66–7.

[204] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 75–6, 80. Cf. Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 74, 495.

[205] Lenin (5), Vol. XLII, p. 74.

[206] *Krasnyi Krym*, Simferopol, 4 Dec. 1920, quoted in Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 495.

[207] Latsis, 1921, p. 16.

[208] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 154–5; Averbukh, p. 19; *Na chuzhoi storone*, VIII, 1924, pp. 101–2.

[209] Chernov, p. 17; Alinin, pp. 21, 23, 46; Averbukh, p. 31.

[210] Melgounov, 1925, p. 166.

[211] *Ibid.*, p. 203.
[212] Chernov, p. 17; Melgounov, 1925, p. 64.
[213] Garvi, pp. 21–3.
[214] Goldman, Vol. II, pp. 841–2; Berkman, pp. 251–2.
[215] Bukharin, 'Proletarskii Iakobinets', in *Feliks Dzerzhinskii, 1926–1931*, p. 143.
[216] *BSE* (1), Vol. V, cols 451–2.
[217] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 228. See also pp. 223–31.
[218] *Ibid.*, p. 81.
[219] Poretsky, p. 214.
[220] Chernov, pp. 7–14.
[221] Serge, p. 80.
[222] Latsis, 1921, p. 28.
[223] Lenin (5), Vol. XLI, pp. 309, 311, speech on 2 Oct. 1920.
[224] *Krasnyi mech*, No. 1, 18 Aug. 1919, p. 1. A copy is held in the B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford.

CHAPTER X

[1] *Vse-Ukrainskaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiia.*
[2] Later renamed Stalingrad, now Volgograd.
[3] Now named Dnepropetrovsk.
[4] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 267, 270.
[5] Belov, p. 259, *note* 2.
[6] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 6: 58, *Izvestiia*, 21 Feb. 1919, text in Belov, pp. 259–61.
[7] Sboichakov *et al.*, p. 96.
[8] Sofinov, p. 180. The Central Committee's decision of 18 Aug. 1919 to put Dzerzhinsky in direct charge of the Special Department was confirmed by the *Revvoensovet* on 27 Aug. 1919—see Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 178.
[9] Gladkov and Smirnov, p. 346; Wolin and Slusser, p. 42, *note* 57, citing *Izvestiia*, 21 July 1920.
[10] Ustinov and Kapitonov, p. 99.
[11] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 6: 58, as cited above.
[12] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 20: 247, *Izvestiia*, 17 May 1919, text in Belov, p. 259, *note* 1.
[13] *Protokoly, VIII sezd RKP(b)*, pp. 410–1. Cf. Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 177.
[14] Carr, 1959, p. 377 and footnote 2, citing A. Geronimus, *Partiia i Krasnaia Armiia*, 1928, p. 80.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 379.
[16] Schapiro, 1970, p. 263, citing *Izvestiia TsK*, No. 8, 2 Dec. 1919.
[17] Schapiro, 1956, p. 29.
[18] Latsis, 1921, pp. 27, 30.
[19] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 33.
[20] Belov, pp. 280–I—see Chapter VIII.
[21] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 270.
[22] Wolin and Slusser, pp. 8, 19–20.
[23] *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik RSFSR 1918–1920*, p. 8. The territorial Chekas' share of the Vecheka budget was 2,115,000,000 roubles. The cost of Vecheka Troops was included in the separate VOKhR allocation of 7,455,957,000 roubles—p. 7. Both the Vecheka's and VOKhR's (Internal Security Troops) allocations came under the overall NKVD budget. For Vecheka-categorised expenditure during 1919, see Gerson, pp. 281–2.
[24] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 217, misspelling Menzhinskii as 'Mentinskii' and Artuzov as 'Arbuzov'. See App. B. for the following: Ivan Petrovich Pavlunovskii, 1888–1937; Artur Khristianovich Artuzov, 1891–1937; Karl Ivanovich Lander, 1883/4–1937. The Special Department's secretary, V. L. Gerson, 1891–1941, served in the political police, Aug. 1918–1937, and was subsequently purged. See *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 189.

[25] Ustinov and Kapitonov, pp. 100–1. For the following see App. B: Efim Georgevich Evdokimov, 1891–1940, and Fedor Timofeevich Fomin, 1894–. V. S. Dukelskii is probably a misprint for S. S. Dukelskii, author of the book *ChK-GPU* (Kharkov, 1923), who in 1921 was deputy chief of the All-Ukrainian Cheka —see Golichenko, 1966, pp. 130–1. For biographical detail on Ian Karlovich Berzin, 1890–1937, see towards end of Chapter XIII. For a description of service in the Red Army's OOs, see F. T. Fomin's *Zapiski starogo chekista*, Moscow, 1964 (first edition, 1962).

[26] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 5: 46, *Izvestiia*, 21 Feb. 1919; *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 5: 48, *Izvestiia*, 23 Feb. 1919.

[27] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 5: 47, *Izvestiia*, 22 Feb. 1919.

[28] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 10-11: 120, 25 Feb. 1919.

[29] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 18: 213, *Izvestiia*, 29 Apr. 1919. An earlier River Militia had been legislated for—but not implemented—by Sovnarkom decree of 25 July 1918, *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 55: 608, entrusting river security to a special militia to be constituted under NKVD control.

[30] M. Vasilev, 'Krasnaia Militsiia' in *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 11, Oct. 1919, p. 6.

[31] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 5: 46, *Izvestiia*, 21 Feb. 1919. The instructions referred to above may be identical with the following document: *V.Ch.K. Obshchie polozheniia, skhema organizatsii i instruktsii borby dlia transportnykh otdelov, otdelenii, komissarov i agentov Chrezvychainoi Komissii na zhel. dor., vodnykh i shosseinykh putiakh i v pochtovo-telegrafnom vedomstve*, M., Izd. V.Ch.K., 1919, 87 pp, cited in Slavik, p. 244.

[32] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. IV, pp. 454–5, 28 Feb. 1919, *Izvestiia*, 2 Mar. 1919.

[33] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 177.

[34] Belov, p. 482, lines 1–6.

[35] Latsis, 1921, p. 29. Dzerzhinsky referred to RTChKs and UTChKs in early Feb. 1920—see Belov, p. 362.

[36] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 192.

[37] Latsis, 1921, p. 27.

[38] Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 5, 83.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 84–5.

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 113–15.

[41] Dzerzhinsky's NKVD appointment was made by the Party's Central Committee and Sovnarkom on 16 Mar. 1919, and was endorsed by VTsIK on 30 Mar. 1919—see Chapter VII.

[42] Tsvigun *et al.*, pp. 210–11.

[43] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. V, pp. 508–10. See also pertinent comments in *Lenin i VChK*, p. 210.

[44] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 61: 668, 19 Aug. 1918, *Izvestiia*, 22 Aug. 1918.

[45] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. V, pp. 508–10.

[46] *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 11, Oct. 1919, pp. 6–7.

[47] Kizilov, p. 56; Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 113.

[48] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 93.

[49] Tishkov, p. 31.

[50] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 54: 523.

[51] Sofinov, pp. 154–5.

[52] Tishkov, pp. 32–5; Kizilov, p. 57; Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 130, 138, 142, 149–50, 162; Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 211.

[53] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 177, footnote. For Vasilii Stepanovich Kornev, 1889–1939, see App. B.

[54] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. V, pp. 508–10.

[55] Sofinov, p. 155.

[56] *Ibid.*; Tishkov, p. 32.

[57] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 129.

[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 143–4.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

[60] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 11: 70, 23 Jan. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 13 Feb. 1920.
[61] Kizilov, p. 57.
[62] Schapiro, 1956, p. 29.
[63] *Iz istorii voisk VChK i pogranichnoi okhrany*, p. 271, cited in Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 215.
[64] Kizilov, p. 57.
[65] Tishkov, p. 39.
[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 32–3, 35.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[68] Meijer, 1971, p. 94, footnote.
[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 108–11.
[70] Meijer, 1964, pp. 704–5.
[71] Belov, p. 288.
[72] Golichenko, 1966, pp. 71–2; Sofinov, pp. 167–8, states that Peters, Latsis, and Naumov headed the Military Council for the Internal Defence of the Kiev area.
[73] Meijer, 1964, pp. 702–5.
[74] Belov, pp. 286–8.
[75] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, p. 570.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 572; Tishkov, p. 97; *Księga Polaków*, p. 212.
[77] Latsis, 1920, pp. 65–9.
[78] Bunyan, 1936, p. 235, quoting from A. Peshekhonov, 'Pered krasnym terrorom' in *Na chuzhoi storone*, II (1923), pp. 204–7.
[79] Gerson, p. 114.
[80] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 54: 605, 22 July 1918, *Izvestiia*, 25 July 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 161–3).
[81] Belov, p. 125 and footnote.
[82] Latsis, 1920, p. 68; however, these figures do not agree with others quoted by him, p. 75, and in *Izvestiia*, 6 Feb. 1920.
[83] Belov, p. 165.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 221.
[85] *Ibid.*, p. 170.
[86] *Izvestiia*, 6 Feb. 1920, quoted these statistics in the category 'shot for misconduct in office'. Elsewhere Latsis (1920, p. 75) gave figures for this category as 157 shot in 1918 and 49 shot in first 7 months of 1919 in only 20 provinces of central RSFSR. Of course the Chekas were not alone in passing such sentences.
[87] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 53: 504, 21 Oct. 1919, *Izvestiia*, 23 Oct. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 331–2).
[88] Sofinov, p. 190. *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 217.
[89] *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia*, No. 4 (51), Apr. 1926, p. 237.
[90] Sofinov, pp. 190–1.
[91] *Ibid.*, p. 191.
[92] The decree of 21 Oct. 1919 which established the Special Revolutionary Tribunal was annulled by a decree of 18 Mar. 1920—*S.U.R.* 1920, No. 22–23: 115, *Izvestiia*, 27 Mar. 1920.
[93] *Osobaia mezhduvedomstvennaia komissiia pri VChK.*
[94] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 53: 504, as cited above. For further detail see Latsis, 1921, pp. 30–2.
[95] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 216.
[96] Latsis, 1921, pp. 44–5.
[97] Gerson, pp. 117–18, citing *Izvestiia*, 12 Dec. 1920.
[98] Sofinov, p. 189.
[99] *Ekonomicheskoe upravlenie.*
[100] *Izvestiia*, 1 Oct. 1919, quoted by Hollis, p. 587. Cf. Wolin and Slusser, p. 37, *note* 27(b).
[101] Tishkov, p. 105.
[102] See *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 217.

[103] *Ibid.*, pp. 215–16. Until summer 1919, when Denikin pushed the Red Army out of the Ukraine, Latsis had been Chairman of the Ukrainian Cheka.

[104] *Ibid.*, pp. 262–3.

[105] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 215–18. Many Chekist names, addresses, and telephone numbers given in the Guide are omitted here.

[106] For S. G. Uralov, 1893–1969, see App. B.

[107] *Sledstvennaia chast.* Elsewhere referred to as *Iuridicheskii Otdel*, i.e. Legal Department.

[108] Ivan Pavlovich Zhukov, 1889–1940; 1909 joined RSDRP; 1918 member VTsIK Revol. Tribunal; Aug.–Nov. 1918 (and summer 1919) chairman Saratov Gub-Cheka; Dec. 1918 chief, Vecheka Transport Dept.; Mar. 1919 Vecheka Collegium member; Feb. 1920 to Front OO. See *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 175, 596; Shabanov, pp. 11–12.

[109] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 262–4.

[110] Actually, Mantsev was posted to the Ukraine in Dec. 1919 as chief of the newly constituted political police organisation there. See below.

[111] N. A. and not I. A. Roslavets, as given in *Spravochnik*.

[112] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 17, 215–18, 262–4; Chernov, pp. 152–4; Popoff, pp. 7–9, 114–15.

[113] Photograph in Alidin *et al.*, pp. 128/9.

[114] Rudnev, 1962, p. 93, features a photo-copy of Viktor Kingisepp's Vecheka pass, made out for access to buildings Nos. 9, 11, and 22, Bolshaia Lubianka.

[115] Chernov, pp. 152–3. For a description of the disbandment of the OO of the Third Army at Ekaterinburg in May 1921, see Agabekov, 1930, pp. 39–40.

[116] *Kratkaia adresno-spravochnaia kniga Moskovskogo Rabochego*, Moscow, 1965, identifies Ulitsa Dzerzhinskogo No. 2 as the address of the KGB. See also Barron, p. 70, and photograph of the KGB HQ façade, p. 270.

[117] Wrangel Archive, Delo 147, *Report on the Vecheka*, Hoover Institution, Stanford.

[118] 'Chekist o Cheka' in *Na chuzhoi storone*, IX, 1925, pp. 109–41, but especially p. 117.

[119] This control may, however, have been exercised by the Instructional Department.

[120] *Instruktsiia iuridicheskomu otdelu*, undated top secret document issued by the All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission; copy in B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford.

[121] *Rukovodstvo dlia instruktorov i agitatorov. Izdanie Volynskoi Gubernskoi Chrezvychainoi Komissii po borbe s kontr-revoliutsiei, spekuliatsiei i prestupleniiami po dolzhnosti*, undated document in B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford. This was a Ukrainian Cheka instruction.

[122] Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 336. Whilst the reference in Bachinskii is to Chekas of the Ukraine, it also applies to Chekas of the RSFSR.

[123] Cf. Latsis, 1921, p. 29, stating that each Provincial Cheka possessed one battalion of infantry and 100 cavalry.

[124] *Izvestiia*, 28 Jan. 1920.

[125] Sofinov, p. 197.

[126] Belov, pp. 360–5.

[127] *Izvestiia*, 18 Jan. 1920, text in Belov, pp. 355–6.

[128] Belov, pp. 369–70.

[129] *Ibid.*, p. 364.

[130] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 17: 98, 5 Mar. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 10 Mar. 1920.

[131] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 11: 70, 23 Jan. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 13 Feb. 1920.

[132] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 79: 371, 10 June 1920.

[133] Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 207–9, 231.

[134] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

[135] Tishkov, pp. 40–1.

[136] Sofinov, p. 218.

[137] Gerson, pp. 90, 291, citing a U.S. Military Intelligence report from Riga.

[138] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 426–9.

[139] This responsibility arose out of the creation, on 24 Nov. 1920, of the Vecheka's Special Department for the Protection of Frontiers—see below.

[140] Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 252–3. Yagoda signed as Vecheka Administrative Director, but his name is here omitted, only his post being recorded.

[141] Aripov and Milshtein, pp. 71–2. In Feb. 1920, Dzerzhinsky appointed Artem (F. A. Sergeev) as Vecheka plenipotentiary representative in the Bashkiria Autonomous Republic, to suppress the nationalist rebellion there—see Tsvigun *et al.*, pp. 193–4.

[142] See obituary in *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, (June) 1925, 6(41), pp. 231–3.

[143] Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 266–71.

[144] Gerson, pp. 91, 291, citing a U.S. Military Intelligence report of 23 Sept. 1921, in U.S. National Archives.

[145] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 79: 683, 9 Dec. 1921, *Izvestiia*, 30 Dec. 1921.

[146] Sofinov, p. 152. The Party issued several instructions on this subject, including '*O sozdanii chastei osobogo naznacheniia*', Apr. 1919, and '*Rukovodstvo k organizatsii chastei osobogo naznacheniia*', May 1919, both in *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, Vypusk I, 1921, p. 211.

[147] Sofinov, p. 152.

[148] *BSE* (2), Vol. XLVII, p. 429. For Party regulations of 26 Aug. 1919 and 1 Oct. 1921, see *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, Vypusk II, 1922, pp. 138–46.

[149] Sofinov, pp. 227–8.

[150] *Izvestiia TsK RKP(b)*, No. 33, Oct. 1921, pp. 42–3.

[151] e.g. no mention in *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920. Peculiar also is the unavailability of the collection of documents entitled *Iz istorii voisk VChK i pogranichnoi okhrany (1917–1921)*, Moscow, 1958—see under *Unlocated or Inaccessible Material*, at end of Bibliography.

[152] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 34: 340, 9 July 1919, *Izvestiia*, 13 July 1919; *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 38: 375, 29 July 1919, *Izvestiia*, 31 July 1919; STO ordinance of 11 May 1920, *Izvestiia*, 16 May 1920; Zyrianov, pp. 28, 36.

[153] Belov, p. 484.

[154] *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, pp. 162–3.

[155] Belov, p. 485.

[156] *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, pp. 164–6; Zyrianov, p. 36.

[157] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 316–7, citing *TsPA IML*.

[158] *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, pp. 169–70. Later in 1921, Kornev was succeeded by Studenikin, and Permakov by Efimov—see pp. 175–6.

[159] *Ibid.*, p. 12; Belov, p. 486.

[160] Wolin and Slusser, p. 37, *note* 28, citing *Pravda*, 13 Feb. 1956.

[161] Gerson, p. 104, citing a U.S. Military Intelligence report of 23 Sept. 1921, in U.S. National Archives.

[162] *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, pp. 13–14.

[163] Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, p. 12.

[164] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 79: 674, 8 Dec. 1921, *Izvestiia*, 29 Dec. 1921.

[165] Latsis, 1921, p. 32.

[166] Menzhinskii, 'O Dzerzhinskom' in *Pravda*, 20 July 1927.

[167] Latsis, 1921, p. 27. *Upravlenie* can also be translated as 'directorate'.

[168] We know from *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, (pp. 215–18), dated 22 Jan. 1920, that at that date there were no 'administrations' in the Vecheka structure; all three administrations are, however, described in Latsis's book, published in 1921 and probably completed by Latsis in late 1920 or early 1921 (his preface is dated 20 Dec. 1920).

[169] Tishkov, p. 105.

[170] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 217.

[171] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 60: 421, 16 Aug. 1921, *Izvestiia*, 21 Aug. 1921. A much earlier decree on bribery was issued in 1918: *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 35: 467.

[172] Belov, p. 486.

[173] Liberman, pp. 28–40, 68.

[174] Successive heads of the Secret-Operational Department and Secret Department were: Latsis, in 1919–20 (see *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 215; Latsis, 1921, p. 56); Samsonov, Sept. 1920–24 (see *Lenin i VChK*, p. 634; Samsonova, pp. 153–4); and Deribas, 1924–29 or later (see Bezpalov, p. 133; Agabekov, 1930, p. 12).

[175] Bezpalov, pp. 57, 98; Agabekov, 1930, p. 12. According to Dumbadze, p. 39, in 1921–22, the Georgian Cheka had a separate department concerned with religion.

[176] Agabekov, 1930, p. 12.

[177] Dumbadze, pp. 40–1; Agabekov, 1930, p. 13. It is not clear exactly when the Information Department was instituted.

[178] Agabekov, 1930, p. 16. Cf. Dumbadze, pp. 40–1.

[179] For further information on the KRO, see Chapter XIII.

[180] Tishkov, p. 100. However, according to Agabekov (1930, pp. 43–4), who served in it from mid- to late 1921, INO was then still known as the Vecheka's 14th Special Section. (This remains unconfirmed.)

[181] Agabekov, 1930, pp. 44–5. In 1921–2, the Georgian Cheka's Foreign Department similarly had home counter-espionage functions—see Dumbadze, p. 39.

[182] Agabekov, 1930, p. 56. For further information on INO, see Chapter XIII.

[183] Agabekov, 1930, p. 41, refers to Bokii as chief of the *Spets-Otdel* in 1921; on p. 43 he indicates that *Spets-Otdel* was originally called the 8th Special Section of the Vecheka. Bokii was appointed member of the Vecheka Collegium on 12 July 1921 (see *Lenin i VChK*, p. 486).

[184] By the late 1920s, and probably much earlier, the *Spets-Otdel's* functions were: control of forced-labour camps, document security in government departments, preparation of Soviet ciphers and breaking of foreign ones, and forgery of documents for Soviet espionage—see Agabekov, 1930, pp. 14–15.

[185] Dumbadze, p. 39.

[186] Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 349.

[187] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 270. Regarding systems for combating banditry in the Ukraine as well as in the RSFSR—see end of Chapter XIV.

[188] *British Labour Delegation to Russia, 1920: Report*, p. 55.

[189] Latsis, 1921, p. 12. Latsis's preface was dated 20 Dec. 1920.

[190] A very rough estimate might go as follows: Vecheka HQ—2,000; M-Cheka and Petrograd Cheka—1,000 each; Provincial Chekas—10,000 (Bunyan, 1967, p. 157, refers to the RSFSR containing 55 provinces in early 1920); surviving District Chekas and politburos—12,000; Transport Chekas—5,000; total—31,000.

[191] Sofinov, p. 218.

[192] Gerson, pp. 91, 291, citing an M.I.D. report of 23 Sept. 1921 from Riga, in the U.S. National Archives, giving geographical deployment of Vecheka Troops.

[193] Gerson, pp. 104, 293, citing identical M.I.D. report, giving geographical deployment of Vecheka Frontier Troops.

[194] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 316–7.

[195] Erickson, p. 763. From a strength of 4,110,000 on 1 Jan. 1921, the Red Army decreased to 1,590,000 by 30 Dec. 1921, by which time the Vecheka had dropped to 143,000.

[196] Belov, pp. 442–3.

[197] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 323.

[198] Gerson, p. 228, citing *Ekonomicheskaia zhizn*, No. 101, 9 May 1922. From these statistics it follows that the Vecheka's strength in Feb. 1922, when it became the GPU, was probably around 125,000–130,000 personnel.

[199] *S.U.R.* 1922, No. 53: 675, 15 Sept. 1922.

[200] *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, pp. 13–14.

[201] Rogozhin and Maimeskulov, pp. 11–12.

[202] *SU USSR* 1919, No. 1: 7; text, dated 3 Dec. 1918, in Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 20. Cf. Rogozhin and Maimeskulov, pp. 12–13, preferring 12 Dec. 1918 as date of decree.

[203] *Vseukrainskaia Chrezvychainaia Komissiia.*

[204] Isaak Izrailevich Shvarts (Party name Semen), 1879–1951; foundry worker; 1899 joined RSDRP, arrested and exiled repeatedly; 1918 engaged in underground activity in German-occupied Ukraine; at First and Second Congresses of KP(b)U, elected to its Central Committee—see *Who Was Who in the USSR*, pp. 513–14; Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. ix, 29, footnote.

[205] Text in Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 87–90.

[206] Rogozhin and Maimeskulov, p. 17.

[207] Maimeskulov *et al.*, pp. 45–6, 50.

[208] Rogozhin and Maimeskulov, p. 18.

[209] Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 32, footnote.

[210] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[211] Maimeskulov *et al.*, p. 51.

[212] Rogozhin and Maimeskulov, p. 19.

[213] Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. xiv, 130, footnote; Maimeskulov *et al.*, p. 56. *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 215, 262, shows that Mantsev was only deputy chairman of the Moscow Cheka (under Dzerzhinsky, its formal chairman), though he was already a Collegium member of the Vecheka.

[214] *SU USSR* 1920, No. 3: 53; text in Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 151–2.

[215] *Tsentralnoe Upravlenie Chrezvychainykh Komissii Ukrainy po borbe s kontrrevoliutsiei, spekuliatsiei i prestupleniiami po dolzhnosti.*

[216] *SU USSR* 1920, No. 5: 72; text in Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 152.

[217] Golichenko, 1966, p. 92.

[218] Maimeskulov *et al.*, p. 63.

[219] *SU USSR* 1922: 228, 22 Mar. 1922; text in Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 363–5.

[220] Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 140.

[221] Rogozhin and Maimeskulov, p. 41. When, in late November 1920, the Ukrainian Cheka arrested 346 important Makhno supporters, the top 40 of these were sent to the Vecheka in Moscow—see *ibid.*, pp. 41–2.

[222] Bachinskii, *et al.*, pp. 154–5.

[223] *KPSS v Resheniiakh i Rezoliutsiiakh*, Part I, p. 443, quoted in Conquest, 1967, p. 27.

[224] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 245, 248; Maimeskulov *et al.*, p. 51.

[225] Sofinov, p. 204.

CHAPTER XI

[1] Koval, pp. 50–3.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 56, citing *Izvestiia*, 21 Jan. 1919.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 56–7, citing *Izvestiia*, 25 Jan. 1919.

[4] Belov, p. 102.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 399, citing *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 69: 314, 12 July 1920; *Izvestiia*, 22 July 1920.

[6] Sofinov, p. 161.

[7] Latsis, 1921, p. 58, quoting a Vecheka circular dated 25 June 1919.

[8] Kizilov, p. 83, citing *Tyl sovetskoi armii za 40 let, Voenizdat*, 1958, p. 30.

[9] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 56: 534, 8 Nov. 1919.

[10] Belov, p. 483.

[11] Viktorov, pp. 67–8; Sboichakov *et al.*, p. 106.

[12] Latsis, 1921, p. 59, quoting Vecheka order No. 203, of 21 Nov. 1919.

[13] *S.U.R.* 1922, No. 1: 15, 19 Dec. 1921, *Izvestiia*, 24 Dec. 1921.

[14] See Chapter I. Lenin's phrase 'vseobshchaia trudovaia povinnost' has the sense of compulsory or conscripted labour service.

[15] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 51: 582.

[16] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 87–88: 905.

[17] Dewar, pp. 45–6 and p. 46, footnote 1.

[18] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 18: 204.

[19] Between Feb. 1917 and Aug. 1920, the population of Moscow decreased from 2.2 million to 1.3 million, and that of Petrograd from 1.2 million in June 1918 to 574,000 in Aug. 1920—see Bunyan, 1967, p. 67, citing *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik, 1918–1920* (Moscow, 1920), Vol. II, pp. 332, 342.

[20] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 12: 124. See also *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 20: 235, of 17 May 1919.

[21] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 56: 537, 14 Nov. 1919. See Chapter IX.

[22] Bunyan, 1967, pp. 90–3, citing *Pravda*, 17 Dec. 1919.

[23] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 8: 49, 29 Jan. 1920.

[24] On militarisation of labour, see Dewar, pp. 52–60; Carr, 1952, pp. 207–22.

[25] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 8: 50, 3 Feb. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 5 Feb. 1920.

[26] *Glavnyi komitet po vseobshchei trudovoi povinnosti.*

[27] Bunyan, 1967, p. 114.

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 109, 114.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 141, citing *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 3: 15.

[30] Dewar, p. 49.

[31] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 57: 543, 19 Nov. 1919, *Izvestiia*, 20 Nov. 1919.

[32] Liberman, p. 14.

[33] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 355–6, citing *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. VII, p. 553.

[34] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 187.

[35] Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, p. 711; Tishkov, pp. 78–9. *Chrezsnegput* stood for *Chrezvychainaia komissiia po borbe so snezhnymi zanosami na zheleznykh dorogakh*—extraordinary commission for combating snow drifts on the railways.

[36] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 314, citing *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXV, p. 92.

[37] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 18: 100, 26 Feb. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 12 Mar. 1920.

[38] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 14: 87, 11 Feb. 1921, *Izvestiia*, 15 Feb. 1921.

[39] *Tsentralnaia chrezvychainaia komissiia po toplivo-guzhevoi povinnosti.*

[40] Bunyan, 1967, pp. 155–6, citing *Izvestiia glavnogo komiteta po vseobshchei trudovoi povinnosti*, No. 2, p. 17. M. K. Ikhnovskii, 1886–1938, served in the Vecheka from April 1918; Oct. 1919 appointed deputy chairman of the Inter-Departmental Commission for Combating Speculation; Aug. 1920 Polish Bureau of RKP(b) representative attached to Fourth Army; Jan. 1921 deputy chief, Sept. 1921 chief, of Vecheka Economic Administration; Bolshevik Party member 1918–21, thereafter without party affiliation (perhaps a casualty of Party purge which started in Oct. 1921)—see *Lenin i VChK*, p. 599.

[41] Bunyan, 1967, p. 157, citing *Izvestiia glavnogo komiteta po vseobshchei trudovoi povinnosti*, No. 3, p. 61.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 115–16, quoting from a report prepared by A. Anikst for the delegates to the Ninth Party Congress, held on 29 Mar. 1920—4 Apr. 1920.

[43] The number of Red Army deserters recaptured during 1919 and 1920 was 2,846,000, of whom about half surrendered voluntarily. The total strength of the Red Army was 3 million by the end of 1919, and 5½ million by the end of 1920. In the last eight months of 1919, out of 1½ million deserters only 10,000 were imprisoned and 600 shot—see Schapiro, 1955, p. 240, footnote 14, citing Bubnov, A.S., *et al.* (editors), *Grazhdanskaia voina*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1930, p. 83, and Geronimus, A., *Partiia i krasnaia armiia. Istoricheskii ocherk*, Moscow/Leningrad, 1928, p. 73.

[44] *Tsentrokomdezertir*, founded in December 1918—*S.U.R.* 1918, No. 99: 1015, 25 Dec. 1918.

[45] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 35: 168, 4 May 1920, *Izvestiia*, 7 May 1920; see also *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 81: 387, 25 Sept. 1920, *Izvestiia*, 28 Sept. 1920; and Latsis, 1920, pp. 72–4.

[46] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 30: 164.

[47] Bunyan, 1967, p. 261.

[48] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 46: 206, 20 May 1920, *Izvestiia*, 22 May 1920.

[49] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 37: 199, 23 Apr. 1921, *Izvestiia*, 8 May 1921 (apparently wrongly dated 23 Feb. 1921 in Belov, p. 486). See also Dukelskii, p. 23.

[50] Vecheka circular, undated, in Latsis, 1921, p. 60.

[51] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 309–10.
[52] Dzerzhinsky's letter of 23 Feb. 1921, written from Kharkov (text in Belov, pp. 427–8). For Karl Martynovich Karlson, 1888–1938, see App. B.
[53] Dzerzhinsky's letter of 12 July 1921, in Belov. pp. 443–4.
[54] *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, pp. 176–9, quoting Unshlikht's order of 15 July 1921.
[55] Sofinov, p. 215. Over 5 million according to Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 281.
[56] Lunacharskii, 1931, p. 182.
[57] Belov, pp. 423, 485.
[58] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 11: 75, 10 Feb. 1921, *Izvestiia*, 12 Feb. 1921.
[59] Belov, pp. 423–5.
[60] Sofinov, pp. 216–17. See also Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 354–61.
[61] Bunyan, 1967, p. 181.
[62] Wolin and Slusser, p. 41, citing *Izvestiia*, 16 Apr. 1921. In between Trotsky and Dzerzhinsky, the NKPS Commissariat was headed from Dec. 1920 to Apr. 1921 by A. I. Emshanov—see Rigby, p. 240.
[63] Lenin (5), Vol. LII, pp. 140, 509; *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 644–5.
[64] Belov, p. 285.
[65] *Księga Polaków*, pp. 211–12; Dziewanowski, pp. 76–7. KPRP: *Komunistyczna Partia Robotnicza Polski.*
[66] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 289; *Księga Polaków*, p. 212.
[67] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 289–96.
[68] *Księga Polaków*, p. 212; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 304.
[69] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 300. Altogether nearly 400 outstanding Chekists were Poles—see *Z pola walki*, 1967, no. 3 (39), p. 51.
[70] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 407. For a survey of Dzerzhinsky's post-1917 involvement in Polish Communist affairs, see pp. 406–17.
[71] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 402, quoting from Central Committee minutes.
[72] Dzerzhinskaia, 1965, p. 340.
[73] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, p. 571.
[74] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 418–19.
[75] Trotsky, 1930, p. 431, indicates that Dzerzhinsky set his heart on undertaking responsible economic work, but was thwarted while Lenin was alive.

CHAPTER XII

[1] Dzerzhinskaia, 1965, p. 267.
[2] Dzerzhinskii, 1966, pp. 257–8. See also Malkov, 1959, p. 194.
[3] Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 150.
[4] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 6, 41.
[5] *Księga Polaków*, p. 210.
[6] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 90.
[7] Dzerzhinskaia, 1965, pp. 260–70.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 276; Malkov, 1959, p. 195.
[9] Stasova, 1969, p. 167; Tishkov, pp. 74–5.
[10] Sheridan, 1927, p. 165; cf. Sheridan, 1921, pp. 27, 85–8; Ravich, 1967, p. 208.
[11] Mitskevich-Kapsukas, p. 55.
[12] Vainshtein, pp. 74, 77. For Aron Isakovich Vainshtein (Party alias Rakhmiel), see *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 56. Vainshtein was born in Vilna, on 23 Nov. 1877, a direct contemporary of Dzerzhinsky.
[13] *Rytsar revoliutsii*, between pp. 112–13.
[14] Dzerzhinskii, 1966, between pp. 192–3.
[15] 'Wanted' circular issued by the Governor of Podole on 12 July 1902, in Hoover Institution, B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection.
[16] Vainshtein, pp. 74, 77.
[17] Dzerzhinskii, 1966, p. 257.
[18] Abramovich, 1962, p. 312; also in Abramovich, 1944, Vol. II, p. 148. According to

Abramovich, D. Y. Dallin happened to overhear the conversation and independently reported it in *The New Leader*.

[19] Dzerzhinskii, 1966, pp. 57, 65, etc.; Dzerzhinskaia, 1965, p. 266.

[20] Trotsky, 1930, p. 112.

[21] Abramovich, 1944, Vol. II, p. 311. Abramovich was told this story by Rakhmiel Weinstein (i.e. Vainshtein), who heard it from his old friend Kamenev, whose fellow-exile he had been in Siberia.

[22] Latsis, 1926, p. 84.

[23] Fotieva, p. 18.

[24] *Izvestiia*, 19 Dec. 1967.

[25] Lockhart, 1932, p. 258.

[26] Drabkina, p. 198.

[27] Dzerzhinskaia, 1962, pp. 13–14; *idem.*, 1965, p. 276.

[28] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, pp. 429–30; Stasova, 1962, p. 6.

[29] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 215, 217, 262.

[30] Menzhinskii, *Pravda*, 20 July 1927.

[31] *S.U.R.* 1923, No. 66: 640, 7 July 1923; *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 29.

[32] Fisher, pp. 205–11.

[33] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 389–90; Valentinov, 1971, pp. 101–2, 130–9; Davies, pp. 385–6.

[34] Davies, p. 377.

[35] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 321–46, 364–88; Valentinov, 1971, pp. 110–27.

[36] Speech on 20 July 1926 at a plenary session of the Party's Central Committee and Central Control Commission—see Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. II, p. 387. Dzerzhinsky died that same day.

[37] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 597. (D.G.) Evseev, a Bolshevik, is also referred to as Deputy Chairman as at Feb./Mar. 1918—see Belov, p. 99.

[38] Peters is known to have signed as Deputy Chairman on various dates between 3 Sept. 1918 (see Belov, pp. 181–2) and 28 Dec. 1918 (see Belov, p. 240). On 27 Mar. 1919, he still figured in second place, between Dzerzhinsky and Ksenofontov, on a Vecheka Collegium list approved by the Sovnarkom (see Belov, p. 266).

[39] Ksenofontov was Deputy Chairman from at least 16 Apr. 1919 when, anomalously, he is shown as having signed a circular as Vecheka Chairman (see Belov, p. 276).

[40] Sofinov, p. 19, *note* 1.

[41] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 442–3, gives 5 Apr. 1921 as the date of the Politburo's decision to appoint Unshlikht as Dzerzhinsky's deputy—his formal appointment by the Sovnarkom must have followed soon afterwards. Sofinov, p. 19, *note* 7, merely dates his appointment as April 1921.

[42] *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part III, col. 178.

[43] Unshlikht, p. 96.

[44] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 346.

[45] Davies, p. 385.

[46] Melgunov, 1931 (IV), p. 2.

[47] The pure formality of the Sovnarkom procedure emerges clearly from Belov, p. 400. See also Chapter VIII.

[48] Belov, p. 400.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

[50] Gorodetskii, p. 297. However 2 more Bolsheviks, Evseev and Chernov, were almost certainly also Collegium members at this time.

[51] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 51. Another LSR, Ilin, was probably already in the Collegium.

[52] *Novaia zhizn*, 9 June 1918. See Chapter III, p. 69.

[53] Latsis, 1926, p. 88.

[54] Belov, pp. 266–7.

[55] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 215.

[56] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 396. This list includes Yagoda, who is omitted from an otherwise identical list of Collegium members in Belov, p. 400.

[57] Latsis, 1921, p. 27.

[58] Lenin (5), Vol. VI, p. 79.

[59] Menzhinsky was a Russified Pole: his biography appears in *Księga Polaków* (p. 572), the biographical dictionary of Poles who participated in the Bolshevik Revolution.

[60] Uralov, 1929, p. 14.

[61] Bajanov, p. 179, who in his capacity as Stalin's assistant secretary in the Politburo frequently dealt with Yagoda, states unequivocally that Yagoda was a Jew. See also Essad-Bey, p. 169; Gul, p. 166; Andics, p. 31; and Yagoda's photograph in Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p. 83. Yagoda was a protégé of Iakov Sverdlov, a Jew, whose niece he married.

[62] But see Menzhinsky's biographical sketch below for a far-fetched allegation of poisoning.

[63] For Sergei Gerasimovich Uralov, 1893–1969—see App. B.

[64] Conquest, 1976, pp. 157–8, 164.

[65] See, for instance, the biographical notes on Blagonravov and Bokii in App. B.

[66] Orlov, p. 225.

[67] Pospelov, Vol. VI, pp. 134–6.

[68] Naumov, pp. 2–3; Budarin, p. 49.

[69] *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 304–5.

[70] Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 157–8; *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. I, pp. 305–6.

[71] *Piatyi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, p. 115.

[72] Alidin *et al.*, pp. 150, 154–5.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 307. See also, between pp. 128–9, a photograph of the M-Cheka Collegium in 1919, with Roslavets seated between Mantsev and Dzerzhinsky; also, an individual photograph of Roslavets.

[74] Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', p. 149.

[75] Sofinov, p. 19.

[76] e.g. Smirnov and Kazarinov, see photographs in *Osoboe zadanie*, at pp. 320–1. See also *Interim Report of the Committee to Collect Information on Russia*, p. 6.

[77] Wolfe, 1966, pp. 211–14.

[78] Politburo minutes quoted in Meijer, 1964, pp. 360–3.

[79] 'Chekist o Ch.K.', p. 132. On 1 May 1919, i.e. shortly after Trotsky's Politburo protest, the Kiev Cheka (and doubtless other Chekas) received an order prohibiting (or, more probably, limiting) the appointment of Jews to top Cheka posts, and requiring, for propaganda reasons, the token execution of Jews—previously only one Jew had been executed by the Kiev Cheka—see pp. 132, 137.

[80] Schapiro, in Introduction to Kochan, p. 3.

[81] Dumbadze, p. 34.

[82] Lockhart, 1932, p. 320.

[83] Hill, 1932, pp. 236–7; Hill, 1936, p. 8; Bradley, p. 58; Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 156 and note on p. 445.

[84] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 248–9; Melgunov, 1964, p. 27.

[85] For Arvid Ianovich Pelshe, born 1899, see *Prominent Personalities in the USSR*, p. 474.

[86] Dan, pp. 146–7.

[87] Fomin, 1964, p. 58.

[88] After the October Revolution the Russians held some 2,000,000 Austro-Hungarian and 200,000 German prisoners of war; the Central Powers held over 4,000,000 Russian prisoners—see Kizilov, pp. 84–5.

[89] Sokolov, pp. 134–8.

[90] For indications of Yagoda's Polish background, see Gul, p. 166; Lewytzkyj, p. 90.

[91] *Księga Polaków*, p. 565.

[92] Stanislav Adamovich Mertens (Stanislaw Mertens), 1892– ?, arrested in 1937, posthumously rehabilitated—see *Księga Polaków*, pp. 563–4.

[93] Stanislav Frantsevich Redens (Stanislaw Redens), 1892– ?, arrested in 1938, posthumously rehabilitated—see App. B.

[94] Bronislav Bronislavovich Bortnovskii (Bronislaw Bortnowski alias Bronkowski), 1894– ?, arrested in 1937, posthumously rehabilitated—see *Księga Polaków*, p. 106.

[95] *Ibid.*, but date incorrectly stated as 30 Aug. 1918; *Izvestiia*, 5 Sept. 1918.

[96] *Księga Polaków*, p. 106.

[97] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 125.

[98] Roman Aleksandrovich Piliar, 1895–1937; his paternal grandmother and Dzerzhinsky's mother, Helena née Januszewska, were sisters; in 1918–19 Piliar was secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party's Central Committee and played a prominent part in the short-lived Lithuanian-Belorussian Soviet Republic; 1921–6 deputy chief of counter-espionage department in Vecheka/OGPU, and subsequently held other high posts in OGPU/NKVD; 1937 perished in purges—see *Księga Polaków*, p. 666; Pudin, pp. 292–5; Zubov, 1971, p. 397. Photograph in *Osoboe zadanie*, between pp. 320–1.

[99] Agabekov, 1930, p. 39.

[100] Belov, pp. 216–17, 285–6; *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, Vypusk 1, Moscow, 1921, p. 102; *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 94, 121; Tsvigun *et al.*, pp. 179–80.

[101] STO resolution of 17 Sept. 1920, in *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 360–1.

[102] *S.U.R.* 1920, No. 57: 251, 10 June 1920.

[103] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, pp. 21–2.

[104] Lenin's speech at Cheka conference on 6 Feb. 1920—see Belov, pp. 370–1.

[105] On the Vecheka's concept of itself as 'the vanguard of the vanguard', see Shteppa, in Wolin and Slusser, p. 81.

[106] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 44; cf. Melgunov, 1931 (IV), p. 2.

[107] Deutscher, 1959, p. 109.

[108] Latvian rendering: Martins Lacis (alias of Janis Sudrabs)—see Kalnaca, p. 99.

[109] Peters, 1925, pp. 194–203.

[110] Lockhart, 1932, p. 328.

[111] *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 442.

[112] Rumbelow, p. 164.

[113] Mende, pp. 121–4.

[114] *The Times*, 5 Apr. 1911, 2–4, 9–10, 13 May 1911.

[115] Rumbelow, p. 164; *The Times*, 9 May 1911.

[116] Rumbelow, pp. 147, 172. But Rogers, pp. 209–10, disagrees.

[117] *Daily Express*, 3 Oct. 1918.

[118] *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, p. 235; Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 552; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, pp. 442–3.

[119] See, for instance, *The Daily Express*, 3 Oct. 1918.

[120] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 552.

[121] Aripov and Milshtein, pp. 72–3, ff.

[122] Peters's picaresque mode of life in the mid-Orient is described by Agabekov, 1930, p. 14.

[123] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 552.

[124] Agabekov, 1930, p. 14.

[125] Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 552; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 442. Peters was a member of the Party's Central Control Commission from 1923 (Twelfth Party Congress) onwards, until early 1934, when he missed re-election (Seventeenth Party Congress)—see *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, Vol. XI (1968), col. 87.

[126] *Daily Sketch*, 9 Dec. 1937.

[127] *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, Vol. XI, col. 87, gives his death date as 1942; Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 552, gives 1938; whilst *Sovetskaia voennaia entsiklopediia*, Vol. VI (1978), p. 307, specifies 25 Apr. 1938

[128] *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 284.

[129] Bachinskii, *et al.*, p. 49.
[130] Golichenko, 1966, pp. 71–2; Meijer, 1964, p. 363, *note* 2.
[131] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 215.
[132] *Granat* (7), *loc. cit.*
[133] *Sovetskaia voennaia entsiklopediia*, Vol. IV (1977), p. 579.
[134] Uralov, 1929, pp. 7–16.
[135] *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part III, cols. 179–80; Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, p. 542; Uralov, 1929, pp. 16–103.
[136] Lunacharsky, 1967, p. 127.
[137] Sukhanov, Vol. VII, p. 203.
[138] Viktorov, pp. 4, 6, 7–8, 17–21, 24.
[139] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 585.
[140] Viktorov, pp. 32, 41, 55, 62.
[141] Belov, p. 266. Kedrov was presumably appointed a Vecheka Collegium member in Feb. 1919, in his capacity as chief of the Special Department, under the terms of the decree *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 6: 58, point 3—see Belov, pp. 259–60.
[142] Sofinov, p. 180.
[143] Viktorov, pp. 67–8.
[144] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 17–18, 215.
[145] Sboichakov *et al.*, p. 106.
[146] Viktorov, p. 71.
[147] *Ibid.*, pp. 72–6.
[148] *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 264.
[149] Viktorov, p. 74.
[150] Orlov, p. 90; Melgounov, 1925, pp. 64, 199–200; Melgunov, 1931 (IV), pp. 2–5; Gul, pp. 85–7; Chernov, p. 17.
[151] Viktorov, pp. 79–80, gives arrest-date as 16 Apr. 1939. *Sovetskaia voennaia entsiklopediia*, Vol. IV, p. 135, gives death-date as 2 Dec. 1941.
[152] *Khrushchev Remembers*, pp. 603–4.
[153] Unshlikht's Jewish origin is deduced from his peculiar surname (a German neologism, suggesting devious, insincere, typical of the jokey names inflicted upon Jews), and from his appearance—see photographs in *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, P. 512, and in Belov, p. 441. Most of the SDKPiL leaders were Jews, the exceptions being Dzerzhinsky and Markhlevskii—see Nettl, Vol. I, pp. 32–3.
[154] *Księga Polaków*, p. 880; *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, Part III, cols. 176–9; *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 512–14; Golub, pp. 84–6.
[155] Latsis, 1925, p. 140; Iroshnikov, p. 212.
[156] Belov, pp. 214–16.
[157] Latsis, 1925, p. 148.
[158] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 34: 451, 27 Apr. 1918.
[159] *Księga Polaków*, p. 880.
[160] *Ibid.*
[161] *Z pola walki*, Vol. II (46), 1969, pp. 125–33.
[162] *Księga Polaków*, p. 880.
[163] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 519.
[164] Carr, 1954, p. 223, footnote 1; Carr, 1959, p. 397.
[165] Golub, pp. 87–8.
[166] *Księga Polaków*, p. 880.
[167] *Sovetskaia voennaia entsiklopediia*, Vol. VIII (1980), p. 200. *Malaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia* (3), Vol.IX, p. 770, specified 28 July 1938 as death date.
[168] *Soviet Intelligence and Security Services* [Vol. I], p. 116, item 868, citing *50 let vooruzhennykh sil SSSR*, a Soviet Ministry of Defence publication, 1968 (but no page ref.).
[169] Dziewanowski, p. 31, n.s.c.
[170] Drachkovitch and Lazitch, 1966, p. 178. Formally, of course, Unshlikht was the Cheka's Deputy Chairman.
[171] Trotsky, 1930, p. 436.

[172] Gladkov and Smirnov, p. 5.
[173] *Księga Polaków*, p. 214.
[174] Trotsky, 1969, Vol. II, p. 214.
[175] Article 'Lenin', 15 July 1915, p. 7; see also earlier article, signed S.-D., 19 June 1915, pp. 6–7. For attribution to Menzhinsky, see Shub, p. 180 (but dating the article July 1916), and Melgunov, 1931 (III), p. 2 (but referring to Menzhinsky's *nom de plume* as 'V—on').
[176] Rabinowitch, p. 226.
[177] Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 161–2; Gladkov and Smirnov, pp. 139–40.
[178] Gladkov and Smirnov, p. 152.
[179] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 581.
[180] *Ibid.*, p. 588.
[181] Gladkov and Smirnov, p. 162.
[182] *Pogranichnye voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, p. 67, footnote; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 37, footnote. However, in neither case is any source cited. Menzhinsky's biographers, Gladkov and Smirnov, do not refer to this very early Vecheka appointment.
[183] Gorodetskii, p. 297, citing *TsPA IML, fond 19.*
[184] Gladkov and Smirnov, p. 188.
[185] Conquest, 1971, p. 537.
[186] Gladkov and Smirnov, pp. 190, 345.
[187] *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 214, 345.
[188] *Ibid.*, pp. 216–18, 345.
[189] Rogozhin and Maimeskulov, pp. 35, 57.
[190] Gladkov and Smirnov, pp. 222, 345.
[191] Sofinov, p. 19, *note* 5.
[192] *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 217, shows Menzhinsky (misspelt Mentinskii) as one of four 'plenipotentiaries' of the Vecheka's Special Department, under Dzerzhinsky and Pavlunovskii. At that date Menzhinsky was not yet in the Vecheka Collegium—see p. 215.
[193] Gladkov and Smirnov, p. 244.
[194] *Ibid.*, p. 346; Wolin and Slusser, p. 42, *note* 57, citing *Izvestiia*, 21 July 1920.
[195] Belov, p. 400.
[196] *Pogranichnye Voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, pp. 12, 164, 166.
[197] Gladkov and Smirnov, p. 264.
[198] *Ibid.*, p. 271; see also *Izvestiia*, 22 Sept. 1923.
[199] Trotsky, 1930, p. 382.
[200] Agabekov, 1930, p. 10.
[201] *Księga Polaków*, p. 572.
[202] Conquest, 1971, pp. 540–51
[203] Melgunov, 1931 (III), pp. 2–7.
[204] Fomin, 1964, pp. 214, 218.
[205] Melgunov, 1931 (III), pp. 2–7.
[206] Trotsky, 1930, p. 382.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Latsis, 1920, p. 9.
[2] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIII, p. 90 (*The State and Revolution*).
[3] Union of Russian People—a very reactionary body, notorious for inciting anti-Semitic pogroms.
[4] Latsis, 1920, p. 75.
[5] Moroz, 1920, cols. 3622–7.
[6] Agranov's article in *Pravda*, 11 Dec. 1921.
[7] Golinkov, 1965, p. 122, citing *TsGAOR, fond 336.*
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 120–3; Golinkov, 1971, pp. 42–5.
[9] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 219.

[10] Golinkov, 1971, pp. 53–7.

[11] *Soiuz Zashchity Rodiny i Svobody*.

[12] Boris Viktorovich Savinkov, 1879–1925.

[13] For accounts of the SZRiS, see: Latsis, 'Soiuz Zashchity Rodiny i Svobody' in *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, 1920, pp. 11–124; Peters, 1924, pp. 11–15; Moroz, 1920, cols. 3611–15; Golinkov, 1971, pp. 99-108; Savinkov, 1920, pp. 25–32, *et seq.*

[14] Latsis, 1926, p. 90.

[15] Ilin, pp. 52–4.

[16] Tishkov, p. 21, citing *Pogranichnik*, 1965, No. 23, pp. 12–14. However, Peters had already hinted at provocation in his *Pravda* statement of 5 Sept. 1918.

[17] For a somewhat misleading account of this episode, see Buikis, 1967, pp. 151–8, and Buikis, 1968, pp. 78–88.

[18] Dukes, pp. 37–8.

[19] Silverlight, p. 66.

[20] Peters, 1924, p. 22; the date was given as 15 August by Lockhart (R.H.B.), 1932, p. 314, but see Soviet news-sheet opposite Lockhart, p. 336.

[21] Eduard Petrovich Berzin was rewarded for his part in the Lockhart Case with the Order of the Red Banner (see Sofinov, p. 97, footnote) and became a Chekist, ultimately administering the Magadan goldfields forced labour project; he was arrested in December 1937, and perished in Stalin's purges—see Kurpnek, pp. 13, 239.

[22] One such document, signed 'R. H. Bruce Lockhart, British Agent in Moscow' (but inexplicably made out in Shmidkhen's true name, to 'Lieutenant Jan Buikis'), figures in facsimile at pp. 320/1 in *Osoboe zadanie*; see also Buikis, 1968, p. 87, and Peters, 1924, p. 23.

[23] Lockhart (R.H.B.), 1932, pp. 314–24.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 316. See also the balanced assessment of the Lockhart affair in Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 68–9.

[25] *Izvestiia*, 5 Sept. 1918.

[26] Latsis, 1920, p. 80.

[27] *Izvestiia*, 5 Sept. 1918; *Księga Polaków*, p. 106.

[28] Malkov, 1959, pp. 240–9; Lockhart (R.H.B.), 1932, p. 317. However, at the time, the Soviet press published an invented Cheka version alleging that Lockhart had been caught red-handed in a 'conspiratorial apartment'—see *Izvestiia*, 3 Sept. 1918. Belov, p. 480, maintains this fiction.

[29] Baroness Marie (known as Moura) Budberg, née Zakrevskaia, daughter of a Russian senator, married in 1911 von Benckendorff, a Russian diplomat stationed in Berlin; after his murder by peasants on his Estonian estate and her affair with Lockhart, she married a Baltic Baron, Budberg, but promptly divorced him; she then became secretary, translator, mistress and muse to Maxim Gorky in Petrograd and Sorrento, and, after Gorky's return to Russia in 1933, she was H. G. Wells's constant companion; she died in Italy in 1974—see her *Times* obituary, 2 Nov. 1974.

[30] Lockhart (R.H.B.), 1932, pp. 318–45.

[31] Hill, 1936, p. 6. After the war, Marchand joined the French Communist Party, but renounced Communism in 1931—see Lockhart (R.B.H.), 1932, p. 334.

[32] Lockhart (R.H.B.), 1932, p. 334.

[33] Belov, pp. 210, 221–3, citing *Izvestiia*, 6 and 26 Nov. 1918; Peters, 1927, 'Zashchita revoliutsii', pp. 174–6.

[34] Reilly, pp. 7–73.

[35] Hill, 1932, pp. 196–261; *ibid.*, 1936, pp. 8 ff.

[36] Lockhart (R.H.B.), 1932, p. 322.

[37] Ullman, p. 164.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 190, citing telegrams between Lockhart and Balfour.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 231–2, citing Lockhart's telegrams to Balfour.

[40] *Izvestiia*, 17 Dec. 1918.

[41] *U.S. Department of State records* at National Archives, Washington, D.C. File

Number 361.1121–Kalamatiano, Xenophon. See also: Hill, 1932, p. 257; Melgounov, 1925, p. 160.

[42] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 251, citing *TsPA IML, fond 17.*

[43] *U.S. Department of State records, op. cit.*

[44] Lockhart, R.H.B., 1932, pp. 322–3. For varying accounts of Reilly's family background see: Lockhart, Robin B., 1967, pp. 22–5; Hill, Brigadier George, letter in *Evening Standard,* 6 Oct. 1967, p. 9.; Kettle, Michael, letter in *The Sunday Times*, 19 Nov. 1967.

[45] Lockhart, Robin B., 1967, pp. 166–87. Ironically, it was on Sidney Reilly that the hero of Ethel Voynich's romantic novel, *The Gadfly,* published in 1897, was based; in the U.S.S.R. *The Gadfly* has long been a morally uplifting, approved best-seller—see Tibor Szamuely, 'The Gadfly and the Spy', in the *Spectator*, 17 May 1968, p. 665.

[46] Sir Paul Dukes, 1889–1967, came to Russia in 1909, becoming assistant conductor at the Mariinskii Theatre, St. Petersburg; during 1915–18 he was a member of the Anglo-Russian Commission in Petrograd under Harold Williams and Hugh Walpole; in the summer of 1918 was recruited by S.I.S. and returned to Russia for undercover intelligence work; knighted in 1920; author of several autobiographical books; see, in Bibliography, Dukes, *Secret Agent 'ST 25', passim*; obituary in *Daily Telegraph*, 28 Aug. 1967.

[47] Golinkov, 1971, pp. 62–3.

[48] Meijer, 1964, pp. 704–5.

[49] Viktorov, p. 63.

[50] Belov, p. 289, citing Lenin (4), Vol. XXIX, p. 371.

[51] The catchphrase 'Death to Spies', i.e. 'Smert Shpionam', in its contraction 'Smersh' later became the colloquial title of the Soviet Military Counter-Intelligence Service, as used during World War II.

[52] Belov, pp. 289–90, citing Lenin (4), Vol. XXIX, p. 372, and *Pravda*, 31 May 1919.

[53] Sofinov, p. 161; Belov, p. 296, quoting *Izvestiia*, 18 June 1919.

[54] Belov, pp. 296–7. For evidence of the National Centre's involvement in plans for a rising in Kronstadt at this time, see Avrich, 1970, p. 109.

[55] Naglovskii, 1968, pp. 153–6. Regarding Naglovskii, see biographical note in *Lenin i VChK*, p. 622.

[56] Sofinov, pp. 171–3; Belov, p. 321, quoting *Izvestiia*, 23 Sept. 1919; Belov, pp. 323–5, quoting *Izvestiia*, 25 Sept. 1919.

[57] Latsis, 1920, pp. 45–6; Sofinov, pp. 177–8.

[58] Text in Belov, pp. 327–8.

[59] Sofinov, pp. 174–8.

[60] Belov, pp. 335–6, citing *Izvestiia*, 25 Nov. 1919; Sofinov, pp. 181–4.

[61] Dukes, pp. 37–44.

[62] Golinkov, 1971, pp. 201–2.

[63] Silverlight, pp. 313–15.

[64] For a romanticised Soviet account of Dukes's intelligence activities in Russia, see Saparov, pp. 52, 173–85.

[65] Golinkov, 1971, p. 218; Melgunov, 1923, pp. 142–9, 156–8.

[66] Melgunov, 1923, p. 143; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan, 1920, p. 217.

[67] Belov, pp. 401–7, citing *Izvestiia*, 17, 19, 22 Aug. 1920; Golinkov, 1971, pp. 218–25; Krylenko, 1964, pp. 56–81.

[68] *Pravda*, 31 Aug. 1921; Belov, p. 445, citing *Izvestiia*, 24 July 1921. *Lenin i VChK*, p. 640, describes V. N. Tagantsev (1890–1921) as Professor of Geography and a former landowner. His father was the eminent jurist, Academician N. S. Tagantsev.

[69] Belov, pp. 445–8, citing *Izvestiia*, 24 July 1921; Golinkov, 1971, pp. 259–66; Sofinov, pp. 236–8.

[70] Belov, p. 486.

[71] Dan, pp. 186–8.

[72] Petrograd *Pravda*, No. 181, 1 Sept. 1921; Moscow *Pravda*, 31 Aug. 1921, also carried a leader and a long article on the conspiracy.

[73] Mandelstam, 1974, pp. 99–100.

[74] Gleb Struve, pp. xxxvi-xlii.

[75] Wolfe, 1967, pp. 121–3; Mandelstam, 1971, pp. 109–10; Mandelstam, 1974, p. 88; Serge, p. 150.

[76] Golinkov, 1971, p. 266, citing *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 311, 314, and Lenin (5), Vol. LII, pp. 278–9, Vol. LIII, p. 169.

[77] Bukharin, 1931, p. 140; Kuskova, *Volia Rossii*, 1928, No. 3, pp. 51–3.

[78] Melgunov, 1964, p. 4; Kuskova, *Volia Rossii*, 1928, No. 3, pp. 51–5.

[79] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 55: 342, 18 July 1921, *Izvestiia*, 21 July 1921. However, this decree refers to the VKPG as the Central Commission for Famine Relief—identical with the name of its predecessor.

[80] Golinkov, 1971, pp. 274–9; Kuskova, *Volia Rossii*, 1928, No. 3, pp. 58–69. The ARA, founded in 1919 to assist war-stricken countries, was directed by Herbert Hoover, future president of the U.S.A.

[81] Kuskova, *Volia Rossii*, 1928, No. 5, pp. 68–71.

[82] Unshlikht, p. 99.

[83] Lenin (5), Vol. LIII, p. 140–2.

[84] Unshlikht, p. 99.

[85] Kuskova, *Volia Rossii*, 1928, No. 5, pp. 72–3.

[86] Belov, pp. 464–6, citing *Izvestiia*, 8 Sept. 1921.

[87] Kuskova, *Volia Rossii*, 1928, No. 5, pp. 68, 76–7. See also Wolfe, 1967, pp. 108–16.

[88] Unshlikht, p. 99. See also Belov, pp. 443–4, quoting Dzerzhinsky's letter of 12 July 1921 (i.e. even before the agreement with ARA), instructing Unshlikht to harness the Chekas to the task of preventing counter-revolutionary exploitation of the famine.

[89] Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, p. 810.

[90] Fisher, pp. 117–19, 129. On 27 June 1922, Eiduk was replaced by another Lett, Karl Lander—see pp. 291–2.

[91] Gorodnichii, p. 49.

[92] Weissman, p. 88.

[93] *Ibid.*, pp. 182 ff.; Gorodnichii, pp. 47–58; Poliakov, *passim.*

[94] Duranty, p. 127; Weissman, p. 182.

[95] Dumbadze, pp. 70–2.

[96] Custine, 1843, Vol. III, p. 14.

[97] Latsis, 1921, p. 56.

[98] Liberman, pp. 145–6.

[99] Dan, pp. 7–8; Berkman, pp. 136, 140, 149.

[100] Dan, p. 7.

[101] Russell, p. 122, letter of 25 June 1920 to Lady Ottoline Morrell.

[102] Bothmer, p. 4; on 22 Apr. 1918, according to Vladimirova, p. 182, *note.*

[103] *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 225, Bliumkin's deposition. See Chapter IV.

[104] Hill, 1932, p. 193. However, Hill had no direct dealings with Bliumkin—letter of 19 Nov. 1967 from Hill to author. Brigadier George Alexander Hill, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C., died in August 1970.

[105] *Kontrrazvedyvatelnyi otdel.*

[106] Agabekov, 1930, pp. 56, 59; Zubov, 1971, p. 398, giving full name as Vladimir Andreevich Styrne; photograph in Golinkov, 1978, Vol. II, between pp. 288–9.

[107] Agabekov, 1930, pp. 11–12.

[108] Kitchin, 1936, pp. 12–18.

[109] Kitchin, 1935, p. 3.

[110] Lenin (5), Vol. XLII, pp. 45–6; *Pravda*, 30 Nov. 1920.

[111] Lenin (5), Vol. XLIV, pp. 39–40.

[112] Gerson, p. 234, citing documents in U.S. National Archives.

[113] Melgounov, 1925, p. 253.

[114] Gerson, *loc. cit.* These detachments were forerunners of the notorious OGPU/NKVD kidnap and assassination squads, whose present-day progeny is controlled by Department V (as in Victor) of the KGB's First Chief Directorate—see Barron, p. 78.

[115] *Narodnyi Soiuz Zashchity Rodiny i Svobody.*

[116] *Russkii Politicheskii Komitet.*

[117] *Russkaia Narodnaia Armiia.*

[118] Golinkov, 1971, pp. 267–74.

[119] Selianinov-Opperput, pp. 7–13 and *passim.* The VNUS staff directed the whole Rear of the Western Front, including Cheka battalions—see p. 8. Mikulich, pp. 184–5, dates Selianinov's first crossing into Poland as at December 1920.

[120] Belov, p. 460, quoting *Izvestiia*, 24 Aug. 1921. See also Khatskevich, 1961 edition, p. 284, which gives a fuller account than subsequent editions.

[121] Pudin, p. 276.

[122] See Selianinov-Opperput, *Narodnyi Soiuz Zashchity Rodiny i Svobody: Vospominaniia*, Berlin, 1922, publisher's name omitted. See also Vraga, pp. 120–2.

[123] Ravich, 1968, pp. 36–9.

[124] Golinkov, 1971, pp. 273–4.

[125] Pudin, pp. 274–95. See also Nikulin, p. 258.

[126] Duranty, pp. 227–8. An indifferent photograph of Savinkov in court figures in *Osoboe zadanie*, between pp. 320–1. Another foreign correspondent, William Reswick, was in a party of twenty-five foreign newsmen who paid a group visit to Savinkov in the Lubianka gaol and conversed with him apparently without restraint—see Reswick, pp. 7–11. These factors make it seem unlikely that Savinkov was impersonated at his trial.

[127] Ravich, 1968, p. 31, (but citing no sources), puts the number of Savinkov's agents captured during 1921–4 at 500.

[128] Nikulin, pp. 14–17, 35–9, 45–7, etc.; Vraga, pp. 119–20.

[129] *Monarkhicheskoe Obedinenie Rossii*—Monarchist Confederation of Russia—see Dvinov, *Politics of the Russian Emigration*, p. 372.

[130] Vraga, pp. 118–23.

[131] Nikulin, p. 280.

[132] *Ibid.*, p. 359; Vraga, p. 133.

[133] Vraga, pp. 134–5; Nikulin, pp. 361–5.

[134] Nikulin, pp. 361–4. For further information on Opperput alias Staunits, see Grant, pp. 261–3, 267–9; *Dni*, 3 Nov. 1927. See also S. L. Voitsekhovskii, *Trest: Vospominaniia i dokumenty*, Zaria, London, Ontario, 1974.

[135] Lobanov, pp. 28–32.

[136] Lenin (5), Vol. XLII, p. 62—Lenin's speech on 6 Dec. 1920.

[137] Tishkov, p. 100.

[138] Agabekov, 1930, p. 138; Vraga, p. 129. Iakov Khristoforovich Davtian subsequently served as Soviet Ambassador to several countries, perishing in Stalin's purges after recall from Warsaw in 1937—see Barmine, p. 19; Hilger, p. 30.

[139] Mogilevskii's obituary in *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, June 1925, No. 6 (41), pp. 234–5; Alidin, p. 306. For Solomon Grigorevich Mogilevskii, 1885–1925, see App. B.

[140] Agabekov, 1930, p. 43. For Mikhail (Meier) Abramovich Trilisser, 1881-1938, see App. B.

[141] Ioganson, pp. 41–2.

[142] Agabekov, 1930, p. 43.

[143] *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

[144] Solomon, Vol. II, p. 472.

[145] *Ibid.*, pp. 518–21.

[146] Orlov, pp. 223–5; *Księga Polaków*, p. 55, giving biography of Kazimierz Barański (Kabiecki), 1894–1937; *Księga Polaków*, pp. 518–19, giving biography of Mieczysław Loganowski, 1895–1937; Barmine, p. 80.

[147] Agabekov, 1930, p. 45.

[148] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 340.
[149] Tsvigun *et al.*, pp. 407, 409, 467–8, 470.
[150] Lazitch and Drachkovitch, pp. 148–9.
[151] Nicolaevsky, 1965, *Contributions à l'Histoire du Comintern*, pp. 12–13.
[152] *Księga Polaków*, p. 666.
[153] *Ibid.*, p. 564.
[154] Maimeskulov *et al.*, p. 208, citing *TsGAOR USSR, fond 3204.*
[155] *Ukrainska Radianska Entsiklopediia*, Vol. V, p. 205, cited by Natalie Grant in an unpublished paper, 1972. The *Zafrontburo*'s work was continued by the *Zafrontburo* of the Twelfth Army.
[156] Maimeskulov *et al.*, p. 154.
[157] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 273.
[158] *Grazhdanskaia voina na Ukraine*, N. K. Kolesnik (editor), Kiev, 1967, Vol. III, pp. 133, 202, cited by Natalie Grant, *op. cit.*; Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 187, footnote.
[159] *Segodnia*, 24 Mar. 1929, cited by Natalie Grant, *op. cit.*
[160] Hill, 1932, p. 193.
[161] *Glavnoe Razvedyvatelnoe Upravlenie.*
[162] *Krasnaia zvezda*, 13 Nov. 1964.
[163] *Soviet Intelligence and Security Services*, Vol. II, 1975, pp. 103–4, citing Gorchakov, Ovidii, 'V golovnom dozore RKKA', in *Sovetskii voin,* Moscow, No. 18 (Sept.), and No. 19 (Oct.), 1972, pp. 28–31 and 40–2, respectively; *Krasnaia zvezda*, 13 Nov. 1964; Dallin, 1955, pp. 4–5 and footnote. Soviet Military Intelligence appears to have been named successively Registration Directorate, Second Directorate, Fourth Directorate, and Seventh Directorate—of the General Staff.
[164] Latsis, 1926, p. 90.
[165] Sofinov, p. 245.
[166] Belov, p. 340.
[167] *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 171, 267, 320–1, 373; Sofinov, p. 112; Gorodetskii, p. 292, citing *Izvestiia*, 15 Dec. 1917.
[168] Latsis, 1926, p. 90.
[169] *Krasnyi mech*, No. 1, 18 Aug. 1919, reported the execution of Pirro, 'Brazilian Minister to the Ukrainian Soviet Government', and of four confederates.
[170] Balabanoff, 1938, pp. 258–60. It is noteworthy that Soviet propaganda has continued to present the Pirro case as an instance of capitalist depravity—see Sofinov, p. 167; Golichenko, 1966, pp. 62–5. For an émigré account of the case, see *Na chuzhoi storone*, 1924, V, pp. 159–68.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Quoted, in translation, in Maxim Gorky, *Untimely Thoughts*, London, 1970, pp. 85–6.
[2] In *The State and Revolution* (Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIII, p. 14), Lenin wrote: 'We must note that Engels very definitely calls universal suffrage an instrument of bourgeois rule.'
[3] Wolfe, 1967, p. 74, citing Maxim Gorky in *Russkii Sovremennik*, No. 1 (March 1924), pp. 229–44.
[4] Latsis, 1921, p. 10.
[5] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 1: 4, 27 Oct. 1917, published in *Gazeta VRiKP*, 28 Oct. 1917. See Chapter I.
[6] *Doneseniia Komissarov Petrogradskogo VRK*, p. 227.
[7] Nikolaevskii, 1932, pp. 11–28, 345; Wolfe, 1966, p. 597.
[8] Trotskii, 1924, p. 105.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 125–6.
[10] *S.U.R.* 1917, No. 10: 156, 18 Dec. 1917, published in *Gazeta VRiKP*, 19 Dec. 1917.

[11] Gorodetskii, pp. 297–8, citing *TsPA IML, fond 19,* and *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 434.
[12] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 28: 362, 28 Jan. 1918, published in *Gazeta VRiKP*, 22 Feb. 1918.
[13] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 35: 471, 4 May 1918, *Izvestiia*, 17 May 1918.
[14] Text in Belov, p. 103.
[15] Scott, p. 5, citing *Izvestiia*, 27 Mar. 1918.
[16] Tsvigun, *et al.*, 153.
[17] *Izvestiia*, 7 Apr. 1918.
[18] 'Instruktsiia Otdela po borbe s kontr-revoliutsiei' in *Organizatsiia ChK*, 1918, p. 12—see end of Chapter II.
[19] Belov, pp. 113–14.
[20] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 154.
[21] Belov, p. 120.
[22] Gorky, p. 182. Other SR, Menshevik, and associated newspapers which were closed down by the Vecheka in Moscow and Petrograd during May and June were *Vpered, Rodina, Narodnoe slovo*, and *Novosti dnia*; a similar fate befell Menshevik and SR provincial newspapers—see Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 157.
[23] Gorky, p. ix.
[24] Kizilov, p. 28.
[25] *S.U.R.* 1919, No. 19: 232, *Izvestiia*, 16 May 1919.
[26] Fainsod, 1958, p. 155.
[27] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 15: 95, 10 Feb. 1921, *Izvestiia*, 24 Feb. 1921 (text in Belov, pp. 425–6).
[28] Dan, pp. 43–4.
[29] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 18: 263.
[30] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 51: 582, article 65.
[31] R. B. H. Lockhart, 1932, pp. 328–9; Kobiakov, p. 275.
[32] *Izvestiia*, 2 June 1918, 11 June 1918, 13 June 1918, 29 June 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 124, 127–33, 144). Cf. Belov, pp. 167–70, 190.
[33] Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 352, 358, *note* 24, citing Mrs. Marguerite Harrison, *Marooned in Moscow*, New York, 1921, p. 132.
[34] Conquest, *Religion in the USSR*, 1968, pp. 14–15, citing N. S. Timasheff, *Religion in Soviet Russia*, London, 1944, p. 54.
[35] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 2, 29 Sept. 1918, pp. 20–1. In the Georgian Cheka, formed in 1921, there was a separate department for combating the clergy—see Dumbadze, p. 39.
[36] Bezpalov, p. 57.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[38] Scott, p. 13, citing N. K. Iustitsii, *otchet IXomu Vserossiiskomu sezdu Sovetov (1921)*, p. 42.
[39] *Izvestiia*, 6 Nov. 1918 (text in Belov, p. 208). See also Chapter II.
[40] Kizilov, p. 27.
[41] Schapiro, 1955, p. 185.
[42] Avrich, 1967, p. 185.
[43] Peters, 1927, 'Bolshaia Lubianka 2'.
[44] Avrich, 1967, pp. 186–8.
[45] See *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 240–317; *Izvestiia*, 28 Dec. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 349–54); Fridman, pp. 105–12; Latsis, 1920, pp. 62–4.
[46] Avrich, 1967, p. 197, citing Lenin (2), Vol. XXIV, p. 437.
[47] Schapiro, 1955, p. 183.
[48] *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 184.
[49] Goldman, Vol. II, p. 870; photograph in *Osoboe zadanie*, at p. 320.
[50] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 634. Another was F. P. Drugov—see p. 370 n. 144.
[51] *Goneniia na Anarkhizm v Sovetskoi Rossii*, pp. 23–4.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 27–63.

[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 34; Berkman, p. 318; Goldman, Vol. II, p. 921.
[54] Schapiro, 1955, p. 123.
[55] Steinberg, 1935, pp. 235–6.
[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 239–40.
[57] Steinberg, 1955, p. 157; *Izvestiia*, 13 Feb. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 250–1).
[58] Steinberg, 1955, p. 161.
[59] *Izvestiia*, 25 Feb. 1919.
[60] *Kreml za reshetkoi*, pp. 15–16; Steinberg, 1935, pp. 247–8.
[61] House-committees (*Domkomy*) were organised in every block of flats or inhabited building to ensure, in co-operation with the Militia and other authorities, that the tenants were properly registered and documented; the *Domkomy* issued food ration cards. See Berkman, p. 149.
[62] Steinberg, 1935, pp. 264–6.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 281–92. Spiridonova died in 1941—see *Lenin i VChK*, p. 638.
[64] Sofinov, p. 130, citing *Krasnaia Moskva. 1917–1920*, Moscow, 1920, p. 630.
[65] Latsis, 1920, p. 75.
[66] *Izvestiia*, 18 Mar. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 265–6).
[67] Dukes, p. 163, quoting from *Collection of Reports on Russia*, No. 1, 1919.
[68] *Izvestiia*, 18 Mar. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 265–6).
[69] Dukes, p. 187.
[70] Lenin's speech on 6 Feb. 1920 at the Fourth Conference of Provincial Chekas—see Belov, p. 368.
[71] Gerson, pp. 151–2, citing *Izvestiia*, 18 Mar. 1919.
[72] Steinberg, 1955, p. 173.
[73] Steinberg, 1935, p. 247; *Kreml za reshetkoi*, p. 15.
[74] As at January 1920, M. K. Romanovskii was deputy to Latsis, then chief of the Vecheka's Secret-Operational Department—see *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 215–16.
[75] Steinberg, 1955, pp. 174–6.
[76] Melgounov, 1925, p. 13.
[77] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 388.
[78] *Kreml za reshetkoi*, pp. 205–8, 214–16.
[79] Bunyan, 1936, pp. 222–3.
[80] *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, No. 5, 5 Apr. 1921, p. 13, quoting Vecheka circular No. 5 of 1 June 1920, addressed to all Provincial Chekas, Special Departments (OOs), and Area Transport Chekas. A fuller, typescript, version of the document, certified as genuine, but dated 1 July 1920, is in the B. I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford. Another, much shorter, version of the circular, dated 17 June 1920, is in Latsis, 1921, p. 56.
[81] *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, No. 23–24 (45–46), 1922, p. 18.
[82] Latsis, 1926, p. 90.
[83] Steinberg, 1935, pp. 276–9.
[84] For Terentii Dmitrievich Deribas, 1883–1937, see App. B.
[85] *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, No. 5, 5 Apr. 1921, p. 13, quoting Vecheka circular No. 5 of 1 June 1920.
[86] Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 248–50.
[87] *Ibid.*, pp. 345–6.
[88] Schapiro, 1955, pp. 150–1.
[89] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 44: 536, *Izvestiia*, 18 June 1918. This ban on the Right SRs was partly revoked by VTsIK on 25 Feb. 1919. See Schapiro, 1955, p. 163.
[90] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 424.
[91] Chernov, p. 51.
[92] *Mémorandum présenté par la Délégation du Parti SR*, 2 Apr. 1922 pp. 7, 14.
[93] Abramovich, 1944, pp. 246–7; Nikolaevskii, 1959, p. 171. Less credibly, Chernov, p. 51, indicates that the debate about executing the Socialist hostages was enacted in the Vecheka Presidium. Of course, neither Lunacharskii nor Krupskaia were themselves members of the Central Committee.

[94] Abramovich, *loc cit.*, and Nikolaevskii, *loc. cit.* David Borisovich Goldendakh, alias Riazanov, 1870–1938, joined the Bolshevik Party in July 1917 with Trotsky's *Mezhraiontsy* group, became director of the Marx-Engels Institute, was expelled from the Party and exiled in 1931, disappearing in the purges—see Schapiro, 1970, pp. 49–50, 398; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 488.

[95] Chernov, p. 52. Cf. Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 173.

[96] Belov, p. 269, citing Lenin (4), Vol. XXIX, p. 229.

[97] Schapiro, 1955, pp. 147–69.

[98] Letter dated 24 Aug. 1919.

[99] *Izvestiia*, 30 Dec. 1919 (text in Belov, p. 354).

[100] Chernov, p. 52.

[101] Bezpalov, pp. 11, 19–23. For similar story regarding Zubkov, see Chernov, p. 54.

[102] Bezpalov, pp. 27, 43, 55–6.

[103] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 315.

[104] Krylenko, 1964, pp. 296–8; Uralov, 1929, pp. 126–7; Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 65, footnote 32; Schapiro, 1955, pp. 166–8.

[105] Getzler, p. 169.

[106] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 159.

[107] *Izvestiia*, 24 July 1918 (text in Belov, pp. 163–4). *Izvestiia*, 25 July 1918, named 37 persons arrested. Cf. Abramovich, 1962, pp. 164–5, reporting about 100 delegates arrested.

[108] Abramovich, *loc. cit.*; Abramovich, 1944, pp. 246–7.

[109] *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. IV, pp. 96–7.

[110] Belov, p. 269.

[111] *Ibid.*, p. 270 and footnote.

[112] Schapiro, 1955, p. 197, citing *Izvestiia TsK RKP(b)*, No. 1, 28 May 1919.

[113] *Izvestiia TsK RKP(b)*, 9 July 1919.

[114] Schapiro, 1955, pp. 198–9.

[115] *Sedmoi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, pp. 60–3, 75. See also Chapter VII.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[117] Vladimirskii in *Vlast Sovetov*, No. 11, October 1919, pp. 1–4.

[118] Schapiro, 1955, pp. 199–200.

[119] Latsis, 1921, p. 56.

[120] Dvinov, *Ot legalnosti k podpoliu*, p. 11.

[121] Schapiro, 1955, p. 205.

[122] Dan, p. 136. According to Serge, p. 130, Dan, Abramovich, and other Menshevik leaders were spared because of Gorky's intercession with Lenin.

[123] *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 289.

[124] Lenin (5), Vol. XLIII, p. 241, written on 21 Apr. 1921.

[125] Latsis, 1921, pp. 16–17.

[126] *Na chuzhoi storone*, V, 1924, pp. 219–22; Berkman, pp. 308–9; Chernov, p. 60.

[127] Dan, pp. 231–66. In late January 1922, Dan and Nicolaevsky left Moscow for Berlin. Boris I. Nicolaevsky, 1887–1966, lifelong Social Democrat, member of Menshevik Party's Central Committee from 1920; 1919–21 director of Historical Archive of the Russian Revolution in Moscow; imprisoned in February 1921 for political activity; expelled from Russia in January 1922; thereafter a distinguished historian and archivist in Western Europe and U.S.A.

[128] Vecheka Instruction No. 186, 30 Dec. 1920, in Latsis, 1921, p. 62.

[129] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 468–9.

[130] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 315.

[131] Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, p. 130.

[132] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

[133] Schapiro, 1955, p. 208, citing Lenin (3), Vol. XXVII, pp. 525–6.

[134] Carr, 1950, p. 211, citing Lenin (3), Vol. XXVII, pp. 239–40.

[135] Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 250–2.

[136] *Ibid.*, pp. 343–4.

[137] As for instance in *Izvestiia*, 18 Mar. 1919 (text in Belov, pp. 265–6).
[138] Text in Belov, p. 146.
[139] Chamberlin, Vol. I, p. 266.
[140] Schapiro, 1955, p. 201.
[141] 'Tsirkuliarnoe pismo VChK, No. 5', of 1 June 1920, in *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, No. 5, 5 Apr. 1921, p. 14.
[142] *British Labour Delegation to Russia. 1920: Report*, pp. 63–5.
[143] *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, No. 2, 1921, pp. 15–16.
[144] Dvinov, 1955, *Ot legalnosti k podpoliu*, p. 4.
[145] Lenin (5), Vol. XLI, p. 38.
[146] Colonel S. V. Zubatov, whilst chief of the Special Department (i.e. Okhrana HQ) in the Department of Police in 1901–1903, organised legal police-sponsored trade unions in competition with workers' underground revolutionary organisations, but was dismissed in 1903 when this experiment in 'police socialism' came to grief—see Schapiro, 1970, pp. 42–3; Lenin (5), Vol. XL1, p. 582.
[147] Belov, p. 436, citing *TsGAOR, Kollektsiia dokumentov po istorii VChK*. See also Belov, pp. 461–2.
[148] Belov, pp. 462–4.
[149] Singleton, p. 499.
[150] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 440.
[151] Dan, pp. 104–14.
[152] Tishkov, p. 103.
[153] Avrich, 1970, p. 47.
[154] Tishkov, p. 104.
[155] Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 495–6. These universally detested cordon detachments, established in 1918 as agencies of the Food Commissariat, were execrated in almost all proclamations current at this time in Petrograd. Their existence had been deplored by the Second Conference of Chekas in Nov. 1918 as being superfluous (since they operated in parallel with the Railway Chekas) and productive of public hostility—see Belov, p. 230. Under a decree of 29 June 1920, the Transport Chekas were required to assist them—see *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 390–2. They were abolished, as was the whole food requisitioning system, under NEP.
[156] The *Oprichnina* was Tsar Ivan the Terrible's praetorian guard, which imposed a reign of terror upon his realm.
[157] *Izvestiia Vremennogo Revoliutsionnogo Komiteta matrosov, krasnoarmeitsev i rabochikh gor. Kronshtadta* (hereafter *Izvestiia VRK Kronshtadta*), 8 Mar. 1921, reprinted in *Pravda o Kronshtadte*, Prague, 1921, pp. 82–4.
[158] Avrich, 1970, p. 170.
[159] *Ibid*, p. 113, citing S. M. Petrichenko, 'O prichinakh Kronshtadtskogo vosstaniia' in *Znamia borby*, No. 14–15, December 1925–January 1926, pp. 4–8.
[160] *Izvestiia VRK Kronshtadta*, 16 Mar. 1921, reprinted in *Pravda o Kronshtadte*, p. 173.
[161] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 443; Avrich, 1970, p. 141.
[162] Avrich, 1970, pp. 148–9.
[163] *Ibid*., p. 153.
[164] *Ibid*., p. 193. However, Avrich does not offer identifying data regarding any Cheka units involved in the Kronstadt episode. Tishkov, p. 103, reports that the first separate battalion of Cheka Troops took part in the final Red Army assault.
[165] Avrich, 1970, p. 193. Angelica Balabanoff (1968, p. 58), likewise drew attention to the significant numbers of Asian troops sent to quell the Kronstadt revolt: 'He [Lenin] had chosen Asian troops because he believed them more reliable in the use of the most dreadful means of repression.'
[166] Avrich, 1970, p. 202. Katkov, 1959, p. 19, put the entire population of Kronstadt at 50,000, half of them soldiers and sailors, and half civilian workers in the naval establishments.
[167] Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 443–4.

[168] *BSE* (3), Vol. V (1971), p. 371, col. 1101.
[169] Avrich, 1970, p. 211.
[170] *Ibid.*, citing A. S. Pukhov, *Kronshtadtskii miatezh v 1921 g.*, Leningrad, 1931, p. 168 and *Grazhdanskaia voina 1918–1921*, Moscow, 1928–30, Vol. I, p. 372.
[171] Avrich, 1970, p. 209.
[172] Oddly enough, Iakovlev's volume of documents on the Internal Troops, 1917–22, whilst devoting much space to the Tambov and Makhno insurrections, ignores Kronstadt altogether. See Wolin and Slusser, pp. 376–7, for analysis of evidence regarding Cheka participatiòn (or lack of it) in suppressing the Kronstadt mutiny.
[173] Avrich, 1970, pp. 214–15.
[174] Dan, p. 154.
[175] Avrich, 1970, p. 215.
[176] Dan, p. 147.
[177] *Ibid.*, p. 159; Avrich, 1970, p. 215.
[178] Maximoff, p. 523.
[179] Malsagoff, pp. 45–6.
[180] Wolin and Slusser, p. 376.
[181] *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, 4(51), April 1926, p. 237.
[182] Sofinov, p. 19, *note* 1. Ksenofontov's successor as Vecheka Deputy Chairman, Unshlikht, was designated for that post by the Politburo on 5 Apr. 1921 (see *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 442–3), with the Sovnarkom's formal appointment still to come, which fits in well with Ksenofontov's reported departure on 15 Apr. 1921. The obituary article (see above) much less convincingly dates Ksenofontov's exit from the Vecheka as 8 Mar. 1921.
[183] Nicolaevsky, 1965, p. 100.
[184] Samsonova, p. 154.
[185] Bezpalov, pp. 69–71.
[186] Katkov, 1959, p. 57, citing Lenin (3), Vol. XXVI, p. 214.
[187] Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 441–2, 450, *note* 18.
[188] Schapiro, 1970, p. 208, citing Lenin (3), Vol. XXVI, p. 248.
[189] Golinkov, 1971, p. 239, citing Lenin (5), Vol. XLV, p. 282.
[190] Latsis, 1921, p. 56.
[191] Latsis, 1920, p. 75.
[192] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 169.
[193] Belov, pp. 417–21. On 13 Jan. 1921, the Vecheka convened a conference, including representatives of the NKVD, NKIu, the Appeals Tribunal, and Revolutionary Tribunal, which proposed the formation of non-judicial commissions attached to trade unions, to review cases of prisoners of worker and peasant social origin—see *Lenin i VChK*, p. 425.
[194] Golinkov, 1971, p. 242; Meijer, 1971, pp. 493, 495.
[195] Meijer, 1971, p. 481. Meijer (pp. 484–563) quotes in full the long Antonov-Ovseenko report; cf. Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 524–5, quoting the frank report of 27 Sept. 1920 by Kornev (overall VOKhR/VNUS commander) after his inspection of the Tambov theatre of operations.
[196] Radkey, 1976, pp. 49–51.
[197] Meijer, 1971, p. 497.
[198] *Ibid.*, pp. 501, 507, 509.
[199] VOKhR became VNUS on 1 Sept. 1920, VNUS being itself dissolved officially on 19 Jan. 1921; no doubt these reorganisations did not take immediate effect.
[200] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 514.
[201] *Ibid.*, pp. 516–17.
[202] Sofinov, pp. 224–5, citing *TsPA IML pri TsK KPSS, fond 76.*
[203] Lenin (5), Vol. LI, p. 310, items No. 557, 558.
[204] Meijer, 1971, pp. 509, 511, 515.
[205] *Ibid.*, p. 537.
[206] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 610.

[207] *Ibid.*, p. 605.
[208] Trifonov, pp. 247–8.
[209] Radkey, 1976, p. 295.
[210] Meijer, 1971, pp. 483, 539.
[211] Pokaliukhin, pp. 252–6.
[212] Evdokim F. Muravev, b. 1896, served in the political police 1921–6, joined Communist Party in 1925—see *Osoboe zadanie*, between pp. 320–1.
[213] Muravev, p. 234.
[214] Radkey, 1976, p. 51.
[215] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 438.
[216] *Soiuzy trudovogo krestianstva.*
[217] Singleton, p. 501, quoting from a document, *Kak Tambovskie krestiane boriatsia za svobodu*, 1921 (probably written by an SR), in the Russian Archives of the Hoover Institution, Stanford.
[218] Meijer, 1971, p. 497.
[219] Muravev, pp. 212–34; Samsonov, pp. 235–43; Kotovskii, pp. 244–51. See also Radkey, 1976, pp. 282–3, 287–95; Pismanik, pp. 41–8.
[220] Belov, pp. 467–8. Grigorii Ivanovich Kotovskii, 1887–1925.
[221] Tishkov, p. 44.
[222] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 614.
[223] Melgounov, 1925, p. 18.
[224] Radkey, 1976, p. 329. Particularly savage reprisals, aimed against insurgents' families or supporters, were threatened in an order of 11 June 1921—see p. 324, quoting *Volia Rossii*, 27 July 1921.
[225] Footman, 1959, p. 112; Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 241, *note* 25.
[226] Footman, 1959, pp. 118–19.
[227] *Ibid.*, pp. 119–27; Serge, p. 122.
[228] Voronovich, pp. 152–4.
[229] Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 131, footnote.
[230] Dukelskii, pp. 74–5.
[231] Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 155–6.
[232] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 282; Zubov, 1971, p. 257; Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 159, footnote; and Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 195—all agree on this date; only Sofinov, p. 204, gives 5 May as Dzerzhinsky's date of *departure* from Moscow for Kharkov.
[233] Sofinov, p. 205; Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 131, footnote.
[234] Tishkov, p. 83.
[235] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[236] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 238.
[237] Tishkov, pp. 85–6; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 285.
[238] *Postoiannoe soveshchanie po borbe s banditizmom.*
[239] Tsvigun *et al.*, p. 240.
[240] Maimeskulov *et al.*, p. 62; Tsvigun *et al.*, pp. 239–40.
[241] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 310.
[242] Iakovlev *et al.*, p. 250.
[243] Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 207, footnote. In 1921, a central Department for Combating Banditry was formed in the Ukrainian Cheka—see Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 349; Malitskii, p. 36.
[244] *Tsentralnaia mezhduvedomstvennaia komissiia po borbe s banditizmom.*
[245] Trifonov, pp. 210–15, 248–9.
[246] Ravich, 1967, pp. 221–2; Karin, p. 203.
[247] Sofinov, p. 229.
[248] *Ibid.*, pp. 232–4; Khaletskaia, pp. 12–18.
[249] Sofinov, pp. 234–6; Aripov and Milshtein, pp. 142 ff.
[250] Sofinov, p. 236.
[251] Aripov and Milshtein, pp. 148–58.
[252] Long extracts from these two reports figure in Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 230–58,

335–58, but with important omissions, e.g. (a) see Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 241, for statement on 3,879 executions effected by Ukrainian Chekas during 1920, and (b) see Malitskii, p. 37, for statistics of Petliura-type bandit casualties suffered during 1921: 444 atamans eliminated (of whom 182 killed, 9 executed), and 29,622 rank and file bandits eliminated (of whom 9,444 killed, 510 executed).

[253] *Polska Organizacja Wojskowa*. Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 235–8, 337–8.

[254] *Ibid., p. 236.*

[255] *Ibid.*, pp. 239–42, 338–41, 350, 352. See also Golinkov, 1978, Vol. I, pp. 302–6, Vol. II, pp. 133–40.

[256] Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 242–4, 350–2. See also Golinkov, 1978, Vol. I, pp. 307–11, Vol. II, pp. 43–6, 137, 141.

[257] Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 245–7.

[258] *Ibid.*, pp. 243–52, 343–6. See also Golinkov, 1978, Vol. II, pp. 104–8.

[259] *Izvestiia VRK Kronshtadta*, 12 Mar. 1921, reprinted in *Pravda o Kronshtadte*, Prague, 1921, p. 128.

CHAPTER XV

[1] For attribution of this unsigned article to Martov, see Bourguina, p. 300.

[2] *Protokoly. X sezd RKP(b),* p. 400.

[3] Belov, p. 437.

[4] *Svoboda Rossii*, 9 June 1918—see Chapter III, p. 68.

[5] Latsis, 1921, p. 10.

[6] Text in *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 424–5.

[7] *Lenin i VChK*, p. 429.

[8] Golinkov, 1971, p. 295.

[9] *S.U.R.* 1921, No. 51: 294, 23 June 1921, *Izvestiia*, 28 June 1921 (text in Belov, pp. 440–2).

[10] These special offices were referred to in the decree as *Osobye kamery narodnogo suda pri Ch.K.*

[11] *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 528–9.

[12] Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, p. 569, *note.*

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[14] *Ibid.*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 567–8. See also p. 261, Lenin's notes for a draft decree on the Vecheka (almost identical with the six-point programme of 1 December, to which the present footnote refers).

[15] Belov, p. 486.

[16] Lenin (5), Vol. XLIV, pp. 567–8.

[17] Carr, 1958, pp. 74–5, citing *VKP(B) v Rezoliutsiiakh* (1941), Vol. I, p. 410.

[18] Both Lenin (5), Vol. XLIV, pp. 327–9, and *V. I. Lenin: biograficheskaia khronika*,Vol. XII (1982), p. 68, date Lenin's Congress speech 23 Dec. 1921, disregarding *Deviatyi vs. Sezd Sovetov, stenograficheskii otchet (22–27 dekabria 1921 goda)*, 1922, which places it late on 22 Dec.

[19] Belov, pp. 470–1, citing *Izvestiia*, 30 Dec. 1921, and S.U.R. No. 4: 42. However, Lenin (5), Vol. XLIV, pp. 567–8, citing *Deviatyi vs. Sezd Sovetov*, p. 300, dates resolution as 27 Dec.

[20] Khromov, pp. 14, 18, 23, 131; Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 329–36; Khaletskaia, pp. 12–18, 22–4.

[21] Unshlikht, pp. 96–7; Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, pp. 144, 604.

[22] Lenin (5), Vol. XLIV, p. 568.

[23] *Ibid.*, Vol. LIV, pp. 149, 608.

[24] *S.U.R.* 1922, No. 16: 160, 6 Feb. 1922, *Izvestiia*, 8 Feb. 1922 (text in Belov, pp. 471–4).

[25] Belov, pp. 471–4.

[26] Hollis, p. 683.

[27] Belov, p. 472.

[28] Tishkov, p. 45.

[29] *Pogranichnye voiska SSSR 1918–1928*, pp. 13–14. See Chapter X.

[30] Gerson, p. 228, citing *Ekonomicheskaia zhizn*, No. 101, 9 May 1922, p. 2. See Chapter X.

[31] *S.U.R.* 1922, No. 53: 675, 15 Sept. 1922.

[32] *S.U.R.* 1923, No. 66: 640, 7 July 1923; Granat (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 29.

[33] *Ezhenedelnik Sovetskoi iustitsii*, No. 7, 1922, p. 2.

[34] Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, pp. 196, 324.

[35] *Ibid.*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 396–7.

[36] *Ibid.*, Vol. XLV, p. 189.

[37] Letter of 17 May 1922 to Kurskii—see Lenin (5), Vol. XLV, p. 190.

[38] *S.U.R.* 1922, No. 51: 646, 10 Aug. 1922, *Izvestiia*, 18 Aug. 1922. See also *S.U.R.* 1923, No. 8: 108, this being an NKVD resolution signed by Dzerzhinsky on 3 Jan. 1923.

[39] *S.U.R.* 1922, No. 65: 844, 16 Oct. 1922, *Izvestiia*, 19 Oct. 1922.

[40] Dumbadze, pp. 40–1; cf. Agabekov, 1930, pp. 13, 18.

[41] Vecheka Circular, No. 5, 1 June 1920 (possibly 1 July 1920), quoted in *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, No. 5, 5 Apr. 1921, p. 12.

[42] *Sotsialisticheskii vestnik*, No. 23–24 (45–46), 1922, p. 18, quoting from the annual review of the Odessa Provincial Cheka, February 1921.

[43] Belov, p. 418.

[44] Latsis, 1921, p. 24. Cf. Ia. Ozolin, 'Iz vospominanii o ChK', in *Rabochii Sud*, No. 24 (136), Leningrad, Dec. 1927, col. 1053.

[45] Lenin (5), Vol. XLIV, pp. 53–4.

[46] Sergei Alliluev, Stalin's father-in-law, is credited with having coined a well-known jest about the Cheka: 'Why is the Soviet state like a wheel?' 'Because it is held together by the Cheka' (linchpin)—see Nora Murray (daughter of the Chekist, Vasilii Korzhenko), *I Spied for Stalin*, London, 1956 (Pan edition), p. 27.

[47] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, p. 572. In November 1920, Dzerzhinsky left the Commission—see Schapiro, 1955, p. 321.

[48] Lenin (5), Vol. XLI, pp. 394, 541, note 154.

[49] Schapiro, 1955, p. 316, citing Lenin (3), Vol. XXVI, pp. 227–8.

[50] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, p. 573.

[51] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 349; Carr, 1950, p. 210.

[52] *Izvestiia TsK, RKP(b)*, No. 33, October 1921, p. 38; Carr, 1950, p. 207. On 19 Sept. 1921, Dzerzhinsky rendered a report to the Party's Orgburo 'on the procedure and methods for checking on and purging the RKP(b)'—see Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, p. 574.

[53] *Protokoly, IX sezd RKP(b)*, p. 398.

[54] *British Delegation to Russia*, 1920, p. 55. See *Lenin i VChK*, p. 281, for Ganetskii's earlier suggestion to Lenin (who referred it to Dzerzhinsky) that all Party members in responsible posts should be obliged to report to the Cheka any information reaching them which could be of possible use in combating counter-revolution and espionage.

[55] Carr, 1954, pp. 292–5.

[56] *Obedinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie.*

[57] Fainsod, 1963, pp. 366–8; Batsell, p. 609.

[58] Wolin and Slusser, p. 11.

[59] *Izvestiia*, 22 Sept. 1923 (amended in *Izvestiia*, 26 Sept. 1923) reported the Sovnarkom's decision of 18 Sept. 1923, appointing Dzerzhinsky as OGPU Chairman, Menzhinsky and Yagoda as his First and Second Deputies, and nominating as OGPU Collegium members: Mantsev, Bokii, Peters, Messing, Balitskii, and Mogilevskii. (Vsevolod Appollonovich Balitskii, 1892–1937 or –1938, was Deputy Chairman of the Ukrainian Cheka; 1923–30 Chairman of the NKVD and GPU of the Ukraine; 1931

appointed Deputy Chairman of the OGPU of the USSR, etc.—see *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 46.)

[60] *Izvestiia*, 17 Nov. 1923. See also Carr, 1959, pp. 442–4.

EPILOGUE

[1] For attribution to Menzhinsky, see p. 416, *note* 175.

[2] *Protokoly, VII konferentsiia RSDRP(b)*, pp. 201–4. Dzerzhinsky persistently opposed the idea of Polish independence; not until 1924–5 did he recant his heretical, un-Leninist views on Polish independence —see Khatskevich, 1965, pp. 149, 399–400; see also Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. II, pp. 194–5.

[3] Carr, 1953, pp. 38–41; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 224.

[4] Schapiro, 1955, pp. 286–7; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 313.

[5] Deutscher, 1959, pp. 84–5.

[6] Lenin (5), Vol. XLV, p. 358.

[7] Trotsky, 1930, pp. 414, 431.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

[9] *Case of Leon Trotsky*, p. 349.

[10] Trotsky, 1930, pp. 415, 431.

[11] Khatskevich, 1965, p. 363.

[12] *BSE* (2), Vol. XIV (1952), p. 252.

[13] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. II, p. 401.

[14] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 571.

[15] Zubov, 1971, p. 421.

[16] Dzerzhinskii, 1967, Vol. I, p. 577.

[17] Valentinov, 1971, p. 130.

[18] Wolfe, 1969, pp. 32–4.

[19] Lenin (5), Vol. XXXIII, p. 100.

[20] *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 51–2. I am particularly indebted to Robert Slusser for this Lenin quotation—see Wolin and Slusser, p. 9.

[21] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 30: 395, equipping the People's Commissar for Communications with 'dictatorial powers' in the sphere of transport.

[22] *S.U.R.* 1918, No. 33: 443.

[23] Lenin's article 'Better Less But Better', *Pravda*, 4 Mar. 1923.

[24] Latsis, 1921, p. 27 (preface dated 20 Dec. 1920).

[25] *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, p. 22.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[27] Hingley, 1970, pp. 87–101.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[29] Gerson, p. 228.

[30] Conquest, 'The Human Cost of Soviet Communism', pp. 22–3—see App. C. Conquest's figures relate, throughout, to the whole of Soviet-controlled territory, not just the RSFSR.

[31] See App. C.

[32] Hingley, 1970, p. 101.

[33] Such recommendations could be submitted, through governors-general or through provincial and city governors, to a Special Board (*Osoboe soveshchanie*) composed of two representatives each from the Ministries of Internal Affairs and of Justice, with a Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs in the chair—see Hollis, pp. 338–40, citing a statute (No. 350) of 1881. This Tsarist procedure bears a close resemblance to that laid down in Soviet decrees of 10 Aug. 1922 and 16 Oct. 1922, enabling the GPU to exile opponents of the Soviet régime by administrative order—see Chapter XV.

[34] See App. C.

[35] Conquest, 'The Human Cost of Soviet Communism', p. 11.

[36] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 75.

[37] Nikolaevskii, 1959, pp. 168–9; Leggett, *Survey* article, pp. 193–9.

[38] *Izvestiia*, 18 Dec. 1927.

[39] Serge, pp. 80–1.

[40] Trotskii, *Nashi politicheskie zadachi*, Geneva, 1904, p. 54, quoted in Daniels, 1960, p. 13.

[41] Schapiro, 1955, p. 74 and footnote 14.

[42] Lenin (4), Vol. XXVII, p. 238; *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* 28 Apr. 1918.

[43] Lenin (5), Vol. XL, p. 272—Lenin's speech on 31 Mar. 1920.

[44] *Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti.*

[45] A recent (1974) Soviet intelligence defector, Captain Aleksei Myagkov, wrote about a course which he attended in 1968 at a KGB training school: 'The activities of the Vecheka during the first years of Soviet power in Dzerzhinsky's days were studied in detail. Dzerzhinsky himself was held up as an ideal Chekist. Many successful operations of his period were described to us. We only got a superficial account of the activities under Yagoda, Yezhov, Abakumov and Beria (when Stalin was in power); the only comment was that the departments made a number of mistakes during those days.' See Myagkov, p. 47.

[46] Tikunov, p. 17.

[47] See the United States Senate Subcommittee publications: *Soviet Intelligence & Security Services*, Vol. I, 1972, pp. 5–93, 225–37, and Vol. II, 1975, pp. 5–97, 279.

[48] By a Supreme Soviet Presidium decree of 27 Sept. 1977, Semen Kuzmich Tsvigun, First Deputy Chairman of the KGB, was created Hero of Socialist Labour and awarded the Order of Lenin on his sixtieth birthday in recognition of his services to the security of the state—see *Izvestiia*, 28 Sept. 1977, p. 1.

[49] *V. I. Lenin i VChK: sbornik dokumentov (1917–1922 gg.)*, S. K. Tsvigun *et al.*, (editors), 'Politizdat', Moscow, 1975, p. 9. Tsvigun was also the principal editor of *Feliks Edmundovich Dzerzhinskii: biografiia*, 'Politizdat', Moscow, 1977, an official biography published in the centenary year of Dzerzhinsky's birth.

[50] *Kratkaia adresno-spravochnaia kniga*, Moscow, 1965, p. 30. For a photograph of the building, see Barron, 1974, facing p. 270.

[51] Knight, 1984, pp. 168–9.

[52] Knight, 1980, p. 143.

[53] Voigt, in his penetrating early analysis and comparison of the two totalitarian police states, Stalin's USSR and Hitler's Third Reich, identified the remarkable affinities between these superficially dissimilar systems, the one preaching a crusade of class, the other, of racial superiority. See F. A. Voigt, *Unto Caesar* (London, 1938), *passim*, but especially pp. 38–40, 51–7, 63–92. See also C. W. Cassinelli, *Total Revolution: A Comparative Study of Germany under Hitler, the Soviet Union under Stalin, and China under Mao* (Santa Barbara and Oxford, 1976), who writes (pp. 3, 4): 'The cataclysmic and traumatic policies of National Socialism and Soviet and Chinese Communism have been based on two shared presuppositions: first, that total social change is possible and, second, that it can be brought about when total power is possessed by those who desire it . . . Although the revolutionary regimes of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao have been far from identical in policy and structure, they have exhibited a basic likeness in their complete rejection of the scientific and social principles of what they call "bourgeois civilization" and in their determination to engender a higher and unprecedented kind of human existence.'

APPENDIX C

[1] Melgounov, 1925, p. 147.

[2] See under *Unlocated or Inaccessible Materials*, at end of Bibliography.

[3] Latsis, 1920, pp. 74–5. Latsis further broke down the total into categories such as: espionage, rebellion, incitement to rebel, membership of counter-revolutionary organisations, profiteering, banditry, desertion, etc.

[4] Latsis, article in *Izvestiia*, 6 Feb. 1920.

[5] Latsis, 1921, p. 9.

[6] These figures, which were announced by the Petrograd Cheka, are included in Chapter VI, in a selective survey of executions over the period Sept.–Dec. 1918. The true Petrograd figures may have been higher.

[7] Bunyan, 1967, p. 157, refers to 55 provinces existing in the RSFSR in early 1920.

[8] Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 74–5.

[9] *Denikin Commission Report concerning Tsaritsyn*, p. 39.

[10] Chernov, p. 197.

[11] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 55–9—see Chapter IX, under *The Vecheka and Summary Justice.*

[12] Melgounov, 1925, p. 54—see Chapter IX, under *Executions.*

[13] Vishniak, p. 28. For instance, Kedrov had 1,200 White Army officers machine-gunned aboard a barge at Kholmogory, killing half of them (see Melgounov, 1925, pp. 67–8), whilst his second wife, Rebeka Plastinina-Maisel, drowned 500 refugees and Miller's soldiers aboard a scuttled barge (see Melgounov, 1925, p. 200). Cf. Orlov, p. 90.

[14] In 1921, 600 persons were taken from various prisons in Petrograd to Kronstadt and drowned in a scuttled barge—see Melgounov, 1925, p. 69, citing Vladimir Voitinsky, *The Twelve Condemned,* p. 25.

[15] Among this continuing massacre reported by Malsagoff (pp. 45–51), one incident stands out: in 1921, 4,000 officers and men of Wrangel's army perished in scuttled barges at the mouth of the River Dvina (p. 48). Solzhenitsyn (Vol. II, 1974, p. 20) refers to this handy method of extermination.

[16] Voronovich, p. 49, citing a Denikin Commission report.

[17] Averbukh, p. 15.

[18] Vishniak, p. 21.

[19] Melgounov, 1925, p. 45, citing Nilostonsky, *Der Blutrausch des Bolschevismus*, Berlin, 1920. The Red Army evacuated Kiev on 30 Aug. 1919.

[20] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 75, citing *Otchet Tsentralnogo upravleniia Chrezvychainykh komissii pri Sovnarkome Ukrainy za 1920 god,* Kharkov, 1921. These statistics are omitted from the same report quoted extensively in Bachinskii *et al.*, pp. 230–58.

[21] Melgounov, 1925, p. 80, citing *Obshchee delo*, 13 Jan. 1921.

[22] Melgounov, 1925, pp. 75–6. Cf. Chamberlin, Vol. II, pp. 74, 495. For this Crimean episode, see also Chapter IX, p. 200.

[23] Latsis, 1920, p. 75.

[24] Sofinov, p. 147.

[25] *Mémorandum présenté par la Délégation du Parti S.R.*, 2 Apr. 1922, pp. 11–14; Chernov, pp. 251–3; Melgounov, 1925, pp. 49–51; Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 218.

[26] Latsis, 1920, p. 81.

[27] Voronovich, pp. 152–4. See end of Chapter XIV.

[28] Footman, 1959, p. 119, citing (1) V. M. Voline (Vsevolod Mikhailovich Eikhenbaum), *La Révolution Inconnue 1917–1921*, Paris, n.d. (republished 1969); (2) P. Arshinov, *Istoriia makhnovskogo dvizheniia 1918–1921 gg.*, Berlin, 1923.

[29] Aripov and Milshtein, pp. 54–5.

[30] Pipes, p. 180. Melgounov, 1925, pp. 51–2, reported that 2,500 people were killed in the suppression of this revolt.

[31] Dumbadze, pp. 53–60.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[33] Brunovskii, pp. 7–15. In 1920–1, Dzerzhinsky tried to persuade Brunovskii to organise and head the Vecheka's Economic Administration—see p. 17.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[35] Conquest, 'The Human Cost of Soviet Communism', p. 11.

[36] Chamberlin, Vol. II, p. 75.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[38] For instance: N. S. Tagantsev, *Smertnaia kazn,* St. Petersburg, 1913, cited in

Solzhenitzyn, 1973, pp. 434–5; M. N. Gernet (editor), *Protiv smertnoi kazni*, (2nd edition) 1907, pp. 385–423, cited in Solzhenitsyn, 1973, pp. 306–7; M. N. Gernet, *Istoriia tsarskoi tiurmy*, Moscow, (3rd edition) 1960–3, Vol. V, p. 68, cited in Hingley, 1970, p. 102.

[39] Conquest, 'The Human Cost of Soviet Communism', pp. 22–3.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 23, citing the *Small Soviet Encyclopedia*, 1st edition.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Appendix A

Chronology

Note: dates prior to Feb. 1918 are given according to the Julian (Old Style) Calendar then observed in Russia, thirteen days behind the Gregorian (New Style) Western Calendar.

CHEKA HISTORY	REPRESSION, CONSPIRACIES, INSURRECTIONS	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
	1917	
12(25) Oct.: Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) of Petrograd Soviet formed		*25 Oct. (7 Nov.):* Second Congress of Soviets opens
25 Oct. (7 Nov.): Bolshevik *coup:* MRC overthrows Provisional Government	*26 Oct. (8 Nov.):* Anti-Bolsheviks form Committee for Salvation of Country and Revolution (KSRiR)	*26 Oct.:* Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) established
29 Oct.: MRC assumes All-Russian status	*27 Oct:* Decree muzzling the press	*29 Oct.: Vikzhel* demands broad socialist coalition government
30 Oct.: MRC made responsible for internal security of Bolshevik régime	*29 Oct:* Officer-cadet rising suppressed in Petrograd	*30 Oct.:* Krasnov and Kerensky repulsed outside Petrograd
Late Oct.: Military Investigation Commission of MRC created	*Late Oct.-early Jan.:* State employees' strike in Petrograd	*2 Nov.:* Bolsheviks victorious in Moscow
16 Nov.: Petrovskii appointed People's Commissar for Internal Affairs (NKVD)	*9 Nov:* MRC arrests KSRiR leaders	*6 Nov.:* LSRs finally secede from SR Party
21 Nov.: MRC forms Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, attached to VTsIK	*11 Nov:* MRC denounces speculators as 'enemies of the people'	*12 Nov.:* Start of elections to Constituent Assembly
5 Dec.: Decision to wind up MRC	*26 Nov:* Striking state employees denounced as 'enemies of the people'	*Late Nov.:* SRs gain decisive election majority
	28 Nov: Decree proscribing Kadet Party as 'enemies of the people'	*22 Nov. (5 Dec.):* Preliminary armistice with Central Powers signed
		24 Nov.: Decree establishing Revolutionary Tribunals

CHEKA HISTORY	REPRESSION, CONSPIRACIES, INSURRECTIONS	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
7 Dec.: All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage (Vecheka) established, attached to Sovnarkom		*2(15) Dec.:* Armistice with Central Powers concluded *9(22) Dec.:* Peace negotiations begin at Brest-Litovsk
10 Dec.: Izvestia announces installation of Vecheka at Gorokhovaia 2, Petrograd		*12 Dec.:* LSRs join Bolsheviks in coalition government
15 Dec.: Vecheka requests Soviets to form local Chekas		
16 Dec.: People's Commissariat for Justice (NKIu) authorises Vecheka to search and arrest		
18 Dec.: Steinberg, LSR Commissar for Justice, releases socialist politicians detained by Vecheka on Sovnarkom authority		
19 Dec.: Sovnarkom condemns Steinberg's action		
21 Dec.: Sovnarkom places Vecheka under theoretical NKIu and NKVD supervision, limiting its functions to preliminary investigation, but with arbitrary right of arrest	*22 Dec:* Vecheka raids HQ of striking state employees in Petrograd	
	1918	
8 Jan.: LSRs enter Vecheka Collegium	*3 Jan:* Cheka arrests 63 SRs in Moscow	*5/6 Jan.:* Dispersal of Constituent Assembly
14 Jan.: Cheka armed unit formed		*10 Feb.:* Peace negotiations broken off

CHEKA HISTORY	REPRESSION, CONSPIRACIES, INSURRECTIONS	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
10 or 12 Mar.: Vecheka moves to Moscow and presently settles in Lubianka	*21 Feb:* Sovnarkom proclamation 'Socialist Fatherland in Danger' imposes martial law as German army advances	*18 Feb.:* German army advance resumed
11–14 June: First Conference of Chekas resolves to form Frontier Chekas, Railway Chekas, and Corps of Vecheka Troops	*22 Feb:* Vecheka proclamation threatening summary justice	*23 Feb.:* Lenin accepts German peace terms
June: Friction develops between local Chekas and Soviets	*24 Feb:* First Cheka summary execution (Eboli)	*3 Mar.:* Peace Treaty signed at Brest-Litovsk
6 July: LSR Rising led by Vecheka combat detachment; capture of Dzerzhinsky and Vecheka HQ	*11/12 Apr.:* Suppression of Anarchists in Moscow	*6-8 Mar.:* Seventh Bolshevik Party Congress; 'Communist Party' title adopted
7 July: LSR Rising suppressed	*29 May:* Arrest of SZRiS (Savinkov) conspirators	*10/11 Mar.:* Government moves to Moscow
8 July–22 Aug.: Dzerzhinsky suspended from Vecheka; Peters in charge	*16 June:* Restoration of death penalty under the law	*15 Mar.:* Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty ratified
16 July: Front Cheka to be formed under Latsis	*18 June:* Right SRs and Mensheviks excluded from Soviets	*15 Mar.:* LSRs quit government but stay in Vecheka
29 July: Vecheka Military Sub-Department formed to direct Front and Army Chekas	*20 June:* Volodarskii assassinated in Petrograd	*9 May:* Decree on forcible collection of grain, leading to peasant insurrections
1 Sept.: Conference of Frontier Chekas	*26 June:* Lenin urges mass terror reprisals in Petrograd	*25 May:* Start of conflict with Czechoslovak Corps
September: Start of Cheka mass terror: conflict grows between Chekas and (a) local Soviets under NKVD (b) local Justice organs under NKIu	*6-7 July:* LSR Rising in Moscow	*11 June:* Committees of the Poor (*kombedy*) introduced
	6 July: Savinkov revolt in Iaroslavl—suppressed on 22 July: more than 400 insurgents executed	*June:* Anti-Bolshevik régimes develop in Volga region and Siberia
October: Dzerzhinsky on leave *incognito* in Switzerland	*16 July:* Tsar executed in Ekaterinburg	*4-10 July:* Fifth Congress of Soviets
	30 Aug.: Uritskii assassinated; Lenin wounded	*10 July:* RSFSR Constitution adopted
	31 Aug: Vecheka calls for mass terror; British Embassy building stormed in Petrograd	*2 Aug.:* Allied occupation of Archangel: start of Intervention

CHEKA HISTORY	REPRESSION, CONSPIRACIES, INSURRECTIONS	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
3 Oct.: Uncompromising Vecheka declaration on local Chekas' relations with Soviets *25 Oct.:* Party Central Committee appoints high-level VTsIK commission to examine Vecheka *2 Nov.:* Short-lived Party and inter-departmental supervision and inspection commission formed to oversee Vecheka *2 Nov.:* Vecheka statute published *25–28 Nov.:* Second Conference of Chekas *3 Dec.:* 1st session of new Defence Council commission appointed to inspect the Vecheka *3 Dec.:* All-Ukrainian Cheka established *19 Dec.:* Front and Army Chekas merged with Red Army security agencies under Chekist Kedrov *26 Dec.:* Moscow Cheka established under Dzerzhinsky's direct control *26 Dec.:* VTsIK appoints special commission to scrutinise the Vecheka	*2 Sept:* VTsIK calls for Red Terror *3 Sept: Izvestia* reports 500 hostages executed by Petrograd Cheka *4 Sept:* NKVD instructs all local Soviets to apply mass terror to the bourgeoisie *5 Sept:* Decree on Red Terror, giving Chekas sweeping repressive powers *28 Nov.-3 Dec.:* Trial of 'Lockhart case' and 'Envoys' plot' agents	*23 Sept.:* (Moderate socialist) Directorate proclaimed in Siberia *9 Nov.:* Revolution in Germany *13 Nov.:* Soviet government annuls Treaty of Brest-Litovsk *18 Nov.:* Directorate overthrown: Kolchak proclaimed Supreme Ruler *14 Dec.:* Petliura nationalists drive Skoropadsky out of Kiev
	1919	
1 Jan.: Vecheka central Special Department (OO) established *24 Jan.:* District Chekas abolished		*3 Jan:* Red Army takes Riga and Kharkov *6-13 Jan.:* Spartacist rising in Berlin

CHEKA HISTORY	REPRESSION, CONSPIRACIES, INSURRECTIONS	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
6 Feb. (published 21 Feb.): Decree establishing Cheka OOs serving with Red Army	*13 Feb.:* LSR leaders arrested	*6 Feb.:* Red Army captures Kiev
8 Feb.: Communist Party Central Committee's declaration championing the Chekas	*21 Feb.:* VTsIK decree transferring Chekas' judicial powers to Revolutionary Tribunals: Chekas still able to execute under martial law, and to confine in concentration camps	*15 Feb.:* Denikin becomes C.-in-C. South-East Russia
16 Mar.: Dzerzhinsky appointed Commissar for Internal Affairs by Party decision—endorsed by VTsIK on 30 March	*10-14 Mar.:* Massacre at Astrakhan	*2-7 Mar.:* First Comintern Congress
2 Apr.: Latsis appointed Chairman of All-Ukrainian Cheka	*17 Mar.:* Strikes (allegedly LSR-inspired) in Petrograd	*18-23 Mar.:* Eighth Russian Communist Party Congress: Politburo and Orgburo created
15 Apr.: Decree establishes NKVD-controlled forced labour camps, initially under Cheka management		*21 Mar.:* Soviet régime established in Hungary
3 May: Vecheka OO instructed to report once weekly to Orgburo through Stalin	*18 June:* Plots uncovered in Petrograd and Kronstadt	*26 Apr.:* Kolchak's Volga offensive halted
28 May: Corps of Vecheka Troops transformed into VOKhR (Internal Security Troops)	*23 July:* National Centre conspiracy suppressed in Petrograd	*Early May:* Gen. Iudenich threatens Petrograd
31 May: Lenin and Dzerzhinsky's proclamation 'Death to Spies'	*18 Aug.:* Suppression of 'Count Pirro's conspiracy' in Kiev	*19 May:* Denikin launches offensive on South-East front
1–3 June: Third Conference of Chekas	*29 Aug.:* Arrest of National Centre leaders in Moscow	*9 June:* Ufa retaken by Red Army: Kolchak retreat continues
18 Aug.: Dzerzhinsky takes direct charge of OOs	*23 Sept.:* Execution reported of 67 Moscow National Centre conspirators	*16 June:* Iudenich threat to Petrograd averted
Mid-Aug.: Ukrainian Cheka dissolved	*25 Sept.:* Anarchist-LSR bomb attack on Communist Party Moscow Committee HQ	*25 June:* Denikin captures Kharkov
21 Oct.: Special Revolutionary Tribunal to combat profiteering attached to Vecheka		*3 July:* Denikin launches offensive towards Moscow
		11 Oct.: Iudenich starts advance on Petrograd
		13 Oct.: Denikin reaches Orel, 250 miles short of Moscow
		20 Oct.: Red Army recaptures Orel and launches counter-offensive
		22 Oct.: Iudenich thrust back from Petrograd

CHEKA HISTORY	REPRESSION, CONSPIRACIES, INSURRECTIONS	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
6 Dec.: Lenin defends terror and Chekas at Seventh Congress of Soviets *22–25 Dec.:* First Conference of OOs *Late Dec.:* Administration of Ukrainian Chekas formed under Mantsev	*25 Nov.:* Arrest reported of National Centre agent, Col. Liundekvist, ex-Chief of Staff of 7th Red Army based on Petrograd	*5-9 Dec.:* Seventh Congress of Soviets *12 Dec.:* Red Army takes Kiev *16 Dec.:* Red Army takes Kharkov
	1920	
3–6 Feb.: Fourth Conference of Chekas *19 Feb.:* Dzerzhinsky appointed Chairman of Committee for Labour Conscription *17 Mar.:* Central Administration of Ukrainian Chekas established *18 Mar.:* Decree introducing Cheka representatives on to Revolutionary Tribunals *29 May:* Dzerzhinsky appointed Chief of Rear of South-West Front in Ukraine *19 July:* Dzerzhinsky appointed Chairman of Polish Bureau of Russian Communist Party's Central Committee *1 Sept.:* VOKhR Troops transformed into VNUS *20 Oct.:* Dzerzhinsky appointed Chairman of Committee for Defence of Moscow *20 Dec.:* Vecheka Foreign Department created	*22 Jan.:* Repeal of death penalty announced (preceded by large-scale Cheka executions) *28 May:* Chekas recover right to apply death penalty *16-20 Aug.:* Trial of Tactical Centre Leaders *19 Aug.:* Start of Tambov insurrection *20 Aug.:* Arrest of Menshevik Party leaders *25 Nov.:* Arrest of leading Anarchists in Kharkov *26 Nov.:* Makhno routed at Guliai Pole *Dec.:* Mass extermination of bourgeoisie in the Crimea	*4 Jan:* Kolchak abdicates as Supreme Ruler in favour of Denikin *16 Jan.:* Allied blockade of Russia raised: end of Intervention *29 Jan.:* Decree on Labour Conscription *29 Mar.-4 Apr.:* Ninth Communist Party Congress *4 Apr.:* Wrangel replaces Denikin as White C.-in-C. *25 Apr.:* Poles attack Russia *June:* Red Army counter-offensive *21 July-6 Aug.:* Second Comintern Congress *31 July:* Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Poland formed, including Dzerzhinsky *15 Aug.:* Red Army repulsed at gates of Warsaw *12 Oct.:* Preliminary peace treaty signed with Poland

CHEKA HISTORY	REPRESSION, CONSPIRACIES, INSURRECTIONS	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
		20 Oct.: Start of final offensive against Wrangel *14 Nov.*: Wrangel evacuates Crimea: end of Civil War *22-29 Dec.*: Eighth Congress of Soviets
	1921	
19 Jan.: VNUS Troops dissolved: Vecheka Troops reconstituted *25 Jan.*: Vecheka Economic Administration formed *27 Jan.*: Dzerzhinsky appointed Chairman of VTsIK Committee for Betterment of Children's Lives		*Mid-Feb.*: Red Army invades Georgia
2 Apr.: Central Administration of Ukrainian Chekas becomes All-Ukrainian Cheka *14 Apr.*: Dzerzhinsky appointed People's Commissar for Communications	*1-17 Mar.*: Kronstadt insurrection *May*: Tambov insurrection suppressed *28 May*: Savinkov's NSZRiS agents rounded up	*8-16 Mar.*: Tenth Communist Party Congress: introduction of NEP *16 Mar.*: Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement signed
23 June: Decree unifying Revolutionary Tribunals and restricting Vecheka's powers *Nov.–Dec.*: Deliberations on decree to curb Vecheka *22 Dec.*: At Ninth Congress of Soviets Lenin proposes radical reorganisation of Vecheka	*5 June*: Arrest of Petrograd Fighting Organisation conspirators *27 Aug.*: Arrest of members of Committee for Famine Relief *28 Aug.*: Makhno survivors seek refuge in Romania	*22 June-12 July*: Third Comintern Congress

CHEKA HISTORY	REPRESSION, CONSPIRACIES, INSURRECTIONS	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
	1922	
5 Jan.–8 Mar.: Dzerzhinsky's expedition to Siberia	Massacres of prisoners in Northern Camps of Special Purpose	*Mar.–Apr.:* Eleventh Party Congress
6 Feb.: Decree replacing Vecheka by GPU, shorn of power to sentence, punish or confine in concentration camps	GPU practices large-scale executions	*3 Apr.:* Stalin appointed Party General Secretary
22 Mar.: Ukrainian GPU established	*17 May:* Lenin's letter to Kurskii on legalising terror	*26 May:* Lenin's first stroke (returns to work, October)
10 Aug.: Decree authorising GPU to exile political opponents	*6 June: Glavlit* established to systematise rigorous censorship	*4–7 Aug.:* Twelfth Party Conference
16 Oct.: Decree authorising GPU to execute bandits and to confine in labour camps	*8 June:* Show trial opens of 34 leading SRs	*4 Nov.–5 Dec.:* Fourth Comintern Congress
	31 Aug.: Pravda reports exiling, internally & abroad, of bourgeois intelligentsia members	*16 Dec.:* Lenin's second stroke
		30 Dec.: Formation of USSR
	1923	
6 July: GPU elevated to OGPU, under USSR Constitution		*9 Mar.:* Lenin's third stroke
18 Sept.: Dzerzhinsky appointed OGPU Chairman, Menzhinsky & Yagoda 1st & 2nd Deputies		*17–25 Apr.:* Twelfth Party Congress
		6 July: USSR Constitution adopted
		17 July: Dzerzhinsky appointed to Defence Council
	1924	
		21 Jan.: Lenin dies
		2 Feb.: Dzerzhinsky appointed VSNKh Chairman
		2 June: Dzerzhinsky joins Politburo (candidate-member)

Appendix B

Biographical Notes

The First Chekist, Dzerzhinsky, receives much attention throughout this study of the Vecheka, Chapter XII of which also contributes biographical sketches of six of his principal lieutenants. The present Appendix contains short biographical notes on forty other senior Chekists; further information concerning them can be obtained by going, in the first instance, to the sources cited for each note.

In these biographical notes, membership of the Bolshevik Party is specified where known; otherwise the (pre-1918) Party is referred to more broadly as the RSDRP, i.e. the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, which combined Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Where death is shown as occurring between 1936 and 1946, it can be assumed, with reasonable certainty, that this was a casualty of Stalin's purges. As previously remarked, death dates have frequently been transferred by the Soviet authorities from the true time of their occurrence—in the period 1936–8, at the peak of Stalin's terror—to later years, and particularly to the period 1941–5, so as to imply that death occurred as a casualty of war. More recently, however, there has been a tendency to restore the true date of death, and this has resulted in contradictions in the records: see, for instance, the note on Blagonravov, for whom three different death dates have been quoted by authoritative Soviet sources. Nor can the accuracy and veracity of the Soviet sources cited always be depended upon in other respects.

AGRANOV, IAKOV SAULOVICH (OR IA. SH.)
1893–1938 (or 1939)

Jew from Gomel, Belorussia; 1912–14 member of SR Party; 1915 joined Bolshevik Party; suffered arrest and exile; Nov. 1917 in Sovnarkom secretariat; 1918–20 secretary of Small Sovnarkom; May 1919 onwards in political police—initially as special plenipotentiary attached to Vecheka Presidium; by Jan. 1920 one of four plenipotentiaries in the Vecheka Special Department (OO); directed investigation of important cases including National Centre, Tactical Centre, Kronstadt revolt, Savinkov's NSZRiS organisation, HQ staff of Antonov's Tambov insurrection, Tagantsev conspiracy, central organ of SR Party (1922), Bliumkin's contact with Trotsky (1929),

Leningrad Terror Centre (Kirov murder, Dec. 1934); July 1934 appointed First Deputy Chairman of NKVD under Yagoda; held rank of Commissar 1st Class of State Security; 1936 assisted preparation of first Moscow show trial; 1937 expelled from Party for 'persistent violation of socialist legality', arrested and executed.

Sources: Who Was Who in the USSR, p. 7; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR,* 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 9, 217; Orlov, pp. 22, 225; Melgunov, 1923, p. 143; Wolin and Slusser, p. 379; Nicolaevsky, 1965, p. 100; Agabekov, 1930, p. 225; Conquest, 1971, pp. 137–8, 441, 496; Iroshnikov, p. 77; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 576.

ALEKSANDROVICH, VIACHESLAV (OR PETR) ALEKSEEVICH 1884–1918

Pseudonym—P. A. Dmitrievskii; peasant from Riazan; Socialist Revolutionary, later LSR; after February Revolution member of executive committee of Petrograd Soviet; 8 Jan. 1918 appointed, with several other LSRs, to Vecheka Collegium, being nominated deputy to Dzerzhinsky; chief of Vecheka Department for Combating Misuse of Authority; largely responsible for directing the administrative and organisational work of the Vecheka until LSR Rising on 6 July 1918, in which he played a prominent part; arrested 7 July and executed.

Sources: Peters, 1931, 'Neistovyi Feliks', pp. 151–2; Peters, 1924, pp. 16, 19–20; Sofinov, p. 77; *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, pp. 179, 191, 193; Steinberg, 1929, pp. 91–5; *Who Was Who in the USSR,* p. 12; *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 51, 576–7 (however, it is not absolutely clear from *Lenin i VChK*, which are the subject's true names, and which constitute his alias).

ARTUZOV, ARTUR KHRISTIANOVICH 1891–1937 (OR 1939)

Born in Ustinovo, Tver Province, son of Fraucci, an Italian-Swiss cheese maker who had settled in Russia; Artuzov's mother's two sisters were married to N. I. Podvoiskii and M. S. Kedrov; in 1903 the Fraucci family moved to Novgorod where Artuzov attended gymnasium; 1916 graduated from Petrograd Polytechnic Institute as metallurgical engineer; Aug. 1917 or 1918 joined Bolshevik Party; 1918 with Kedrov on Archangel front; by Jan. 1920 was one of four plenipotentiaries in the Vecheka Special Department (OO); summer 1920 headed Cheka OO in Soviet–Polish War; as chief of Vecheka/OGPU KRO Department since 1921/2, directed the *Sindikat-2* and *Trust* deception operations which culminated in the capture of Boris Savinkov (Aug. 1924) and Sidney Reilly (Sept. 1925); 1934 headed NKVD Foreign Administration; 1935 also deputy head of Mil. Intelligence; 1937 arrested and executed; posthumously rehabilitated.

Sources: Tarianov, pp. 77–9; Zubov, 1971, pp. 397–8; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii*

RSFSR, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 217; Krivitsky, pp. 17, 167–9; Polikarenko, p. 293; Gladkov & Zaitsev, pp. 207–8; *Osoboe zadanie*, pp. 282, 293, photograph p. 320.

ATARBEKOV (ATARBEKIAN), GEORGII ALEKSANDROVICH 1891–1925

Armenian, born in Erevan Province; 1908 joined Bolshevik Party; 1910–11 studied law Moscow University; 1910–14 revolutionary activity in Moscow; 1918–19 chairman of North-Caucasian Cheka and chief of Cheka OO on Caspian–Caucasian front; Mar. 1919 bloodily suppressed Astrakhan rising; Aug. 1919 to Moscow to join Vecheka OO; appointed chief of Cheka OO on southern front; after defeat of Denikin, appointed chief of Rostov Revolutionary Committee; as Vecheka plenipotentiary on Caucasian front, suppressed rising in the Kuban; earned reputation for extreme cruelty through mass executions of several thousand Cheka prisoners in Ekaterinodar and Armavir during Red Army retreat in face of Wrangel offensive in the Kuban (Aug. 1920); in Baku as Vecheka plenipotentiary for Azerbaijan; early 1921 to Armenia, where suppressed Dashnak rising in his capacity of *Revvoensovet* plenipotentiary on Caucasian front; chairman of Armenia's temporary Revolutionary Committee; after Soviet subjugation of Georgia (mid-Feb. 1921), in Tiflis as People's Deputy Commissar of *Rabkrin*, and as presidium member of Transcaucasian Communist Party Control Commission; killed 22 Mar. 1925 in aircraft accident.

Sources: Sofinov, p. 87, footnote; *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, 1925, No. 6 (41), pp. 231–3; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 35; Dumbadze, pp. 64–7; *Iz istorii Grazhdanskoi Voiny v SSSR*, Vol. III, p. 851.

AVANESOV, VARLAAM ALEKSANDROVICH 1884–1930

Armenian, of peasant origin, party alias Suren Martirosov or Martirosian; attended Stavropol gymnasium; studied medicine at Zürich University, having settled in Switzerland as a T.B. sufferer; revolutionary since 1901; 1903 joined Armenian Social Democratic Party; himself a Menshevik, acted as secretary of joint (Bolshevik and Menshevik) RSDRP group in Switzerland; 1914 returned to Russia and became a Bolshevik; prominent in Moscow Soviet after February Revolution; 27 Oct. 1917 appointed secretary of VTsIK of (Second) Congress of Soviets, retaining this appointment until late 1919—in this capacity attended most Sovnarkom and Defence Council meetings; from 6 Nov. 1917 until 1927 also candidate-member of Presidium of VTsIK (RSFSR) and, since 1923, also member of TsIK (SSSR); late 1919 appointed Deputy Commissar (No. 2 to Stalin) in

Commissariat of State Control *(Goskontrol*—later *Rabkrin)*, working there until 1924; subsequently held other senior government posts; simultaneously served in Vecheka/GPU/OGPU Collegium 1918/1919–24.

Sources: Geroi Oktiabria, Vol. 1, pp. 35–6 (with photograph); *BSE* (1), Vol. 1 (1926), col. 118; *Protokoly zasedanii VTsIK II*, pp. 3, 35; Zubov, 1965, p. 157, *note;* Belov, p. 266; Lenin (5), Vol. XLIV, p. 613; *Izvestiia*, 19 Dec. 1922.

BAKAEV, IVAN PETROVICH 1887–1936

Born in Saratov Province, son of a peasant; industrial worker; 1905 joined revolutionary movement; 1906 joined Bolshevik Party; active as underground revolutionary in Baku, Astrakhan, and St. Petersburg; frequently exiled, spent over 6 years in prison; took part in October Revolution as deputy secretary and then as secretary of Petrograd Soviet; divisional commissar in Red Army; 1919–20 chairman of Petrograd Cheka, awarded title 'honoured Chekist'; subsequently Cheka plenipotentiary in South-Eastern Krai; head of political board and member of *Revvoensovet* in Leningrad Military District; chairman of Leningrad Province Party Control Commission; *Rabkrin* plenipotentiary in North-Western Region; at Fourteenth Party Congress (Dec. 1925) was member of Leningrad delegation which opposed Central Committee; after Congress joined Zinoviev-Kamenev-Trotsky opposition group; 1926 member Party Control Commission and TsIK USSR; at Fifteenth Party Congress (Dec. 1927) expelled from Party but later reinstated; Jan. 1935 sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment for alleged complicity in assassination of Kirov; 24 Aug. 1936, sentenced to death in trial of 'Trotsky-Zinoviev terrorist centre' and executed.

Sources: BSE (1), Vol. IV (1926), col. 378; Serge, pp. 79, 81–2; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 43; Conquest, 1971, pp. 87, 141–3, 158.

BELENKII, ABRAM Ia. 1883–1941

1902 joined RSDRP; 1903 arrested; escaped in 1904; emigrated to Paris, where he joined Bolshevik group; returning to Russia after February Revolution, ran Bolshevik Party printing press in Petrograd; joined Vecheka and headed Lenin's bodyguard during 1918–24, also acting as one of Dzerzhinsky's two personal secretaries; continued service in political police; arrested and died in prison.

Sources: Lenin (5), Vol. XLI, p. 568; Meijer, 1971, p. 182; Peters, 1924, p. 30; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 215; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 58; *Rytsar revoliutsii*, p. 312; photograph in (a) Tishkov, p. 103, (b) *Osoboe zadanie*, p. 320.

BLAGONRAVOV, GEORGII IVANOVICH 1895 (or 1896)–1938

Son of white-collar worker; attended Moscow University; Mar. 1917 joined Bolshevik Party; elected to VTsIK of First Congress of Soviets; serving as army ensign, was active in Bolshevik Military Organisation; 25 Oct. 1917 occupied (as its commissar) Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, whose cannon shelled Winter Palace; continued as Fortress commandant; investigated Petrograd officer cadet rising of 29 Oct.; 21 Nov. (4 Dec.) 1917 appointed to short-lived five-man Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, attached to VTsIK of Second Congress of Soviets; 1918 member of *Revvoensovet* on eastern front; dismissed in disgrace by Trotsky for defeatism; Oct. 1918–31 served in Cheka-OGPU, from the start in its Transport Department, which he headed from 1921; 1931–5 People's Deputy Commissar for Communications; 1935–37 headed Administration of Highways under NKVD; 5 July 1936 appointed Commissar of State Security, Grade 1; at Seventeenth Party Congress (Jan.–Feb. 1934) elected candidate-member of Party Central Committee; shot 9 Feb. 1938; posthumously rehabilitated.

Sources: BSE (3), Vol. III, p. 407 (giving his dates as 1896–9 Feb. 1938); Lenin (5), Vol. L, p. 514 (giving dates as 1895–1937); *Lenin i VChK*, p. 581 (giving dates as 1895–1943); *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 70; Trotsky, 1930, pp. 403–4; Conquest, 1985, pp. 16–17, 30, 59, 160; *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. I, pp. 168–70, with photograph.

BOKII, GLEB IVANOVICH 1879–1937

Georgian, son of Tiflis schoolteacher; graduated from Petersburg Mining Institute; Bolshevik Party membership backdated to 1900; exemplary revolutionary record, featuring twelve imprisonments and two Siberian exiles; 1905 fought at the barricades; Apr. 1917 elected secretary of Petrograd Committee of Bolshevik Party; Petrograd MRC member in October *coup*; Mar. 1918, or subsequently, appointed deputy chairman of Petrograd Cheka and, after Uritskii's assassination, served briefly as its chairman; chief of Cheka OO on eastern and Turkestan fronts; 8 Oct. 1919 appointed to Sovnarkom and VTsIK Commission for Turkestan Affairs; 1919–20, as Vecheka plenipotentiary, terrorised Turkestan; 12 July 1921 appointed to Vecheka Collegium; for many years headed the Vecheka/GPU/OGPU/NKVD important Special Department *(Spets-otdel)*; 1937, still in NKVD; shot 15 Nov. 1937.

Sources: Geroi Oktiabria, Vol. I, pp. 182–3; *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 486, 582; Iakovlev, p. 674; *Ezhenedelnik VChK*, No. 6, 27 Oct. 1918, p. 17; *Iz istorii Grazhdanskoi Voiny v SSSR*, Vol. III, p. 584, *note* 85; Agabekov, 1930, p. 15; Petrov, pp. 129–30; *BSE* (3), Vol. III, p. 470, col. 1398; Lenin (5) Vol. LII, p. 468; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 80; Conquest, 1985, p. 30; photograph in Aripov, p. 70

BULGANIN, NIKOLAI ALEKSANDROVICH 1895–1975

Born in Nizhnii Novgorod (NN), son of white-collar worker; 1917 joined Bolshevik Party; 1918–22 served in Vecheka; Jan. 1919, with other leading members of NN Provincial Cheka who had organised savage terror locally, forced to leave NN because of public and Party criticism; thereafter in Cheka OOs, serving in Budenny's cavalry and in Turkestan; 1922–7 in VSNKh; 1927–30 director of Moscow electricity plant; 1931–7 chairman of Moscow City Soviet; July 1937 Chairman of RSFSR Sovnarkom; 1938–41 Deputy Chairman of USSR Sovnarkom; 1941–3 member of Military Councils on several fronts; 1944 member of State Committee for Defence, and People's Deputy Commissar for Defence; 1947 Marshal of the Soviet Union, Minister of the Armed Forces, and Deputy Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers; 1955–1958 Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers; 1934–61 member of Party Central Committee (1934 as candidate-member, 1939 as full member); 1948–58 member of Politburo (later Presidium) of Central Committee; 1958 relieved of his state and Party offices, and appointed chairman of economic council of Stavropol; criticised for having joined the 'anti-party group' of June 1957; Feb. 1960 retired on pension; died Feb. 1975.

Sources: BSE (3), Vol. IV (1971), p. 105, col. 302; *Prominent Personalities in the USSR*, pp. 97–8; Nicolaevsky, 1965, pp. 230–3; obituary in *Daily Telegraph*, 26 Feb. 1975.

DEICH, MAKS ABELEVICH 1886–1937

Jew and Bundist; 1905 sentenced to penal servitude; escaped to USA; 1917 returned to Russia; 1919 joined Communist Party; Feb. 1918 briefly co-chairman Saratov Gub-Cheka, at Jan. 1920 headed NKVD Railway Dept.; 1920–22 chairman Odessa Gub-Cheka, earning reputation for cruelty and drug addiction; 1922 deputy head Vecheka Economic Administration; 1924 onwards in state economic work.

Sources: Bachinskii, p. 190, footnote; Terekhin, p. 61; Goldman, Vol. II, pp. 841–5; Berkman, pp. 250–1, 254; Fomin, 1964, p. 156; Gerson, p. 63; Shabanov, pp. 9–10.

DERIBAS, TERENTII DMITRIEVICH 1883–1939

Ukrainian peasant; 1903 joined RSDRP in Kremenchug; experienced arrests, exile, and escapes; during Civil War head of divisional political department in 3rd Army, and 5th Army; late 1920 joined Vecheka Secret Department, under Samsonov, presently becoming his deputy; 1921 participated in suppression of Kronstadt Mutiny (being seriously wounded) and of Tambov Revolt; 1924 succeeded Samsonov; late 1929 to Far East as OGPU plenipotentiary; 1934

NKVD chief in Far Eastern Krai; Nov. 1935 Commissar of State Security, First Class; 1936 Order of Lenin; Jan.–Feb. 1934 elected candidate-member of Party Central Committee; 1937/38 arrested; perished 22 Aug. 1939; posthumously rehabilitated.

Sources: Bezpalov, p. 133; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 125; *Krasnaia zvezda*, 11 Oct. 1963; Steinberg, 1935, pp. 276–9; Agabekov, 1930, p. 12; Conquest, 1985, pp. 15, 16, 44, 93; Pismanik, *passim*, photograph, p. 46.

EIDUK, ALEKSANDR VLADIMIROVICH 1886–1938

Latvian, joined Social Democratic Labour Party in 1903; 11–12 Apr. 1918 commanded Lettish rifle battalion which mopped up Anarchists in Moscow; 7 July 1918 his unit participated in crushing LSR Rising; 1917–19 chairman of Revolutionary Tribunal, 5th Army, and chief of Political Department, 6th Army; Mar. 1919–21/2 Vecheka Collegium member; from June 1919 also member of NKVD Collegium and chairman of *Tsentroplenbezh*, later *Tsentroevak*; 1920 gained notoriety in Cheka punitive action in Archangel; 1919–20 member of Vecheka three-man board (with Peters and Avanesov) supervising Central Timber Committee; 1921 Soviet government plenipotentiary attached to American Relief Administration; 27 June 1922 replaced by Karl Lander; Defence Council plenipotentiary to Main Fuel Board; arrested and perished in purges.

Sources: Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, pp. 585, 810; Belov, p. 266; Solomon, pp. 38, 270–4; *Krasnaia kniga VChK*, p. 183; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 17, 215; Hilger, pp. 35–6; Meijer, 1964, pp. 216–17; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 159; Fisher, pp. 117–29, 291–2. Eiduk figures in group photograph in *Osoboe zadanie*, p. 320.

EVDOKIMOV, EFIM GEORGIEVICH 1891–1940

Son of a soldier; reputedly a common criminal prior to 1917 Revolution; 1918 joined Bolshevik Party; 1919 headed OO of Moscow Cheka; Jan. 1920 appointed deputy chief of Ukrainian Cheka and chief of its OOs; Deputy Chairman of Ukrainian GPU; led punitive expeditions against insurrections; gained 4 Orders of the Red Banner; from late twenties headed North Caucasus Territory of OGPU; 1928 engineered Shakhty show trial; 1934 Party First Secretary for North Caucasus Territory ; was Stalin's holiday drinking companion; 1940 executed; since rehabilitated.

Sources: Fomin, 1964, p. 125; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 262, 264; Golichenko, 1966, pp. 93, 115; Orlov, p. 28; Hingley, 1974, p. 188; Bachinskii, pp. 130, 141; Conquest, 1971, pp. 336, 389, 730–3; Conquest, 1985, pp. 25, 33, 38, 39, 68, 99, 104, 105; Alidin, p. 305, photograph, p. 128.

EVSEEV, DMITRI GAVRILOVICH 1892–1942

1910 joined RSDRP; Oct. 1917 member of Petrograd MRC and staff of Red Guards; 5 Dec. member of MRC liquidation commission; 7 Dec. founder-member of Vecheka Collegium; Feb./Mar. 1918 referred to as Vecheka Deputy Chairman investigating Col. Khomutov's conspiratorial organisation, *Soiuz realnoi pomoshchi*; served in Corps of Vecheka Troops; Nov. 1918 posted to General Staff Academy; thereafter engaged in responsible military duties.

Sources: Chugaev, Vol. III, p. 663; Belov, pp. 71, 78–9, 99, 207; Iakovlev, p. 681; Golinkov, 1971, p. 108; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 595.

FOMIN, FEDOR TIMOFEEVICH 1894—

Textile worker; 1915–17 army private; Aug. 1917 joined Bolshevik Party; Jan. 1918–35 served in political police; 1919–20 chief of OOs of 1st and 3rd Ukrainian Armies, deputy chief of OO of 12th Army, also served in 10th Army; 1920 deputy chief of OO for the Ukraine; 1921 chief of security for Black Sea and Azov coasts; May 1921 chairman of Crimean Cheka; 1921–30 various senior posts in GPU and OGPU Frontier Troops in Ukraine, Leningrad, Caucasus, and elsewhere; 1930–Jan. 1935 chief of OGPU/NKVD Troops and Frontier Defence in Leningrad Military District; member of Leningrad Regional and City Party Committee; Jan. 1935, with other top functionaries of Leningrad NKVD, given light sentence for negligence in connection with murder, on 1 Dec. 1934, of Kirov, Party secretary for Leningrad; the others were shot in 1937, but Fomin miraculously survived, eventually retiring as state pensioner; published his reminiscences of service in the political police.

Sources: Fomin, F. T., *Zapiski starogo Chekista*, Moscow, 1964 (first edition 1962), *passim; Rytsar revoliutsii*, p. 332; Bachinskii, p. 51; Conquest, 1971, p. 94; Yakir, pp. 93–4; photograph in *Osoboe zadanie*, p. 320.

FOMIN, VASILII VASILEVICH 1884–1938

1910 joined RSDRP; repeatedly arrested and exiled; Oct. 1917 member of Petrograd MRC; Dec. 1917–20 Vecheka Collegium member, successively chief of Vecheka Territorial Liaison Department and Transport Department; Apr. 1921 appointed People's Deputy Commissar for Communications under Dzerzhinsky; 1924 elected member of Party's Central Control Commission; 1926–30 in People's Commissariat for Internal Trade; later People's Deputy Commissar for Water Transport; 1938 manager of Textile and Tailoring Trade Trust; perished in purges, on 1 Sept. 1938.

Sources: Lenin (5), Vol. LII, p. 140; *ibid.*, Vol. LIV, p. 805; Peters, 1924, p. 6; Meijer, 1971, p. 374; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 170; photograph in *Osoboe zadanie*, p. 320.

IAKOVLEVA, VARVARA NIKOLAEVNA 1885–1944

Bourgeois origin; studied maths and physics in Moscow; 1904 joined RSDRP, vacillating for some time between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks; 1905–16 her career followed familiar pattern of revolutionary work (much of it in Moscow) alternating with prison, exile, escape, and (during 1910–12) emigration; Mar. 1917 secretary of Bolshevik Party's Moscow Region Bureau; July/Aug. 1917 elected Central Committee candidate-member at Sixth Party Congress; active role in October *coup*; NKVD Collegium member; June 1918 transferred to Vecheka; July 1918–Jan. 1919 Vecheka Collegium member; Sept. 1918–Jan. 1919 chairman Petrograd Cheka, directed terror; Jan. 1919 recalled by Lenin urgently to Moscow and posted to *Narkomprod*; 1919 administrative director in VSNKh; thereafter many important governmental and Party posts; 1918 opposed Brest–Litovsk Peace Treaty, and generally followed Trotsky line until 1926; Mar. 1938 witness in Moscow show trial; herself purged and died in detention.

Sources: Granat (7), Vol. XLI, Part II, col. 279; *BSE* (1), Vol. LXV (1931), col. 464; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 653; Belov, pp. 197, 117, *note* 1; *Leninskii Sbornik*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 113, 118; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 602; Conquest, 1971, pp. 537–40.

IUROVSKII, IAKOV MIKHAILOVICH 1878–1938

Hailed from Kaninsk in Tomsk Province; Jew, converted to Lutheran religion in Berlin; watchmaker in Tomsk; 1905 joined RSDRP; 1912 exiled from Tomsk for revolutionary activity to Ekaterinburg where he opened a photography shop; served as dental medical orderly during World War; after October Revolution became chairman of Ural Region Revolutionary Tribunal in Ekaterinburg; member of Ural Regional Soviet, also Regional Commissar for Justice; Collegium member of Ural Regional Cheka; 16/17 July 1918 led Cheka squad which executed the ex-Tsar and his family at Ekaterinburg, on order of Ural Regional Soviet; Dec. 1918 Collegium member of Moscow Cheka; 1919–20 member Ekaterinburg Provincial Soviet Executive Committee and chairman Ekaterinburg Provincial Cheka; worked for *Rabkrin*; 1921 onwards employed in various Party, economic, and administrative capacities; perished in purges.

Sources: Sokolov, pp. 133–8; Bykov, pp. 112–13, 116; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 617; Alidin *et al.*, p. 308; Reznik, *passim.*

KARLSON (OGRIETIS), KARL MARTYNOVICH 1888–1938

Latvian, of working class origin; 1905 joined Bolshevik Party; experienced arrest and detention, emigrated; June 1917 returned to Russia; 1918–19 in Vecheka as chairman of Kazan Provincial Cheka; Dec. 1919 posted to Ukrainian Cheka; chairman Donets Provincial Cheka; Deputy Chairman of Ukrainian GPU; chief of Kharkov Regional NKVD Administration; shot 11 Jan. 1938.

Sources: Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 141; Conquest, 1985, pp. 15, 18, 44, 45, 136, 169.

KEDROV, M. S. —see biographical sketch in Chapter XII, pp. 269–71.

KOMAROV, NIKOLAI PAVLOVICH 1886–1937

Party alias of Fedor Evgenevich Sobinov; of peasant background, himself an industrial worker; 1905 active in revolutionary movement in St. Petersburg; 1909 joined Bolshevik Party; 1915–16 member of Petrograd Party Committee; May 1916 arrested; active again after February Revolution; Oct. 1917 participated in storming of Winter Palace; political work in Red Army; autumn 1919, as chief of Petrograd Cheka OO, investigated Tactical Centre case; chairman of Petrograd Cheka; secretary of North West Bureau of Party Central Committee; 1926–9 chairman of Leningrad Soviet and of executive committee of Leningrad Provincial Soviet; March 1921 at Party Tenth Congress elected to Party Central Committee, but at Seventeenth Congress in 1934 he was demoted to candidate-member status, having displeased Stalin by neutral attitude towards Zinoviev (whom he had succeeded in Leningrad posts in 1926); perished in purges, on 27 Nov. 1937.

Sources: Saparov, p. 24; Shub, p. 374; Dan, p. 119; *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. I, pp. 556–7; Conquest, 1971, pp, 326–7, 572, footnote; Conquest, 1985, p. 54; photograph in (a) *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. I, pp. 556–7, (b) *Chekisty*, p. 288.

KORNEV, VASILII STEPANOVICH 1889–1939

Village teacher; 1917 joined Bolshevik Party; served as ensign in World War I; Aug. 1917 elected chairman of regimental committee; Dec. 1917 chairman of Bolshevik Military Council on Rumanian front; 1918–19 chairman of Riazan Provincial Soviet executive committee, and of Riazan Provincial Party Committee, also chief of Riazan rifle division; 20 Mar. 1920 chairman of Military Council of VOKhR Troops; 16 Apr. 1920 People's Deputy Commissar for Internal Affairs in capacity of commander of VOKhR Troops; 29 July 1920 appointed member of Vecheka Collegium; 6 Sept. 1920

commander of VNUS Troops and simultaneously deputy chairman of Moscow City Defence Committee; Jan.–Feb. 1921 commander of Vecheka Troops and simultaneously, as from 29 Jan. 1921, chief of RSFSR Militia; Feb. 1921 deputy chairman of VTsIK Commission for the Betterment of Children's Lives; 1922 sent by Party for administrative work in Siberia; 1929–30 RSFSR People's Deputy Commissar for Internal Affairs.

Sources: Iakovlev, p. 686; Lenin (5) Vol. LI, p. 501; Tishkov, p. 41; photograph, p. 103.

KSENOFONTOV, IVAN KSENOFONTOVICH 1884–1926

Like his father, a textile worker; 1903 joined RSDRP; twice arrested for participating in strikes; 1912–14 on trade union work in Moscow, then exiled; 1914 to Riga, where mobilised for army service; after February Revolution, member of 2nd Army Committee; elected to Constituent Assembly; elected to VTsIK at the Second to Sixth Congresses of Soviets, inclusive; 7 Dec. 1917 a founder-member of Vecheka Collegium; Deputy Chairman of Vecheka from March/April 1919 until 15 April 1921, meanwhile also functioning at various times as chairman of the Vecheka Special Tribunal, of the VTsIK Supreme Tribunal, and as member of the VTsIK Supreme Tribunal for Appeals; Mar. 1921 delegate to Tenth Party Congress, from which despatched to Petrograd during Kronstadt Rising, armed with special powers; Apr. 1921 administrative director of Party's Central Committee *apparat*, worked in Stalin's Private Secretariat (for discussion of his possible role in helping Stalin to gain grip on Vecheka/OGPU machine, see Wolin and Slusser, pp. 375–6); 1925–6 employed in People's Commissariat for Social Insurance; died of stomach ulcer.

Sources: Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, No. 4 (51), Apr. 1926, p. 237; Meijer, 1964, pp. 636–7; Sofinov, p. 19, *note* 1; photograph in (a) Belov, p. 85, (b) Tishkov, pp. 8, 103.

LANDER, KARL IVANOVICH 1883 or 1884–1937

Lett, attended school in Libau, Latvia; 1905 joined (Latvian? or Russian) Social Democratic Party; active in 1905–7 Revolution in Moscow; after February 1917 Revolution, member of Revolutionary Council of Western Front; 1917 member of Bolshevik Party's Minsk and North West Region Committee; following October *coup*, elected member of VTsIK Presidium; 22 Jan. 1918, as chairman of Minsk Soviet proposed instant formation of department for combating counter-revolution and speculation, of which he became member; 9 May 1918–9 Apr. 1919 worked as RSFSR People's Commissar for State Control; 1919–20 one of four plenipotentiaries in Vecheka

Special Department (OO), later chief of OO of Caucasian Front, and Vecheka's plenipotentiary representative in North Caucasus and Donets area; 27 June 1922 replaced Eiduk as Soviet Government's plenipotentiary representative attached to ARA and other foreign organisations for famine relief.

Sources: Meijer, 1964, p. 125; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 217; N. Gubernatorov's article in *Nedelia*, 21 Apr. 1968, p. 10; Fisher, pp. 291–2; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 611; Maidanov, pp. 31–2; Rigby, p. 240.

LATSIS, M. Ia.—see biographical sketch in Chapter XII, pp. 266–8.

MANTSEV, VASILII NIKOLAEVICH 1888–1939

1905 began studies at Moscow University, participated in Moscow Rising; 1906 joined RSDRP, became secretary of Moscow Region Party Bureau; 1911 exiled, but escaped to France, where he attended Lenin's Party school at Longjumeau, also studying at Grenoble University; 1913 returned to Russia and engaged in underground revolutionary work; mobilised during war; after October 1917 again became secretary of Moscow Region Party Bureau; Sept. 1918 joined Cheka; 1919 deputy chairman (but *de facto* acting chairman) of Moscow Cheka; late 1919 Vecheka Collegium member; late Dec. 1919 appointed Chairman of revived Ukrainian Cheka, and (from 28 Feb. 1920) Commander of the Rear of the South West Front (except during Dzerzhinsky's tenure of that office from late May–mid-July 1920); 25 Mar. 1920 formally appointed Chairman of renamed Ukrainian Cheka, now *Tsuprchrezkom*; 1922–3 Chairman of Ukrainian NKVD and GPU; 18 Sept. 1923 appointed to OGPU Collegium; 1923 in *Rabkrin*, Moscow, and Deputy Chairman of Central Control Commission of RKP(b); member of TsIK of USSR; 1924 Deputy Chairman of VSNKh; subsequently various other posts; 1936–7 Deputy Chairman of Supreme Court of RSFSR; Mar. 1938, in the Bukharin trial, M was assigned role of self-incriminating defendant (having, at time of Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty negotiations, sided with Bukharin); perished, reportedly in 1939.

Sources: Lenin (5), Vol. LI, p. 508; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, pp. 215, 262; Orlov, p. 286; Conquest, 1971, pp. 497–8, 538–40; Dukelskii, pp. 48, 75; Golichenko, 1966, p. 92; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 369; Maimeskulov *et al.*, pp. 56–7; Bachinskii *et al.*, p. 138, footnote; *Izvestiia*, 22 Sept. 1923; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 617; Alidin *et al.*, p. 305; photograph in (a) *Osoboe zadanie*, p. 320, (b) Alidin *et al.*, p. 128.

MEDVED, FILIPP DEMIANOVICH 1890–1943

1907 joined RSDRP; May 1918 member of Vecheka Control Collegium; Sept. 1918 chairman of Tula Gub-Cheka; Mar. 1919, and again on 23 July 1920, confirmed as member of Vecheka Collegium; May 1919 chairman of Petrograd Cheka; Aug. 1920 chief of OOs on western front in war with Poland; 1921 Vecheka plenipotentiary in Western Krai; Nov. 1921 appointed deputy chairman of Moscow Cheka; Mar. 1922 appointed chief of GPU's Moscow Provincial Department; in Aug. 1924 OGPU representative in Belorussia; after murder of Kirov on 1 Dec. 1934, Medved, as chief of Leningrad NKVD, together with his deputy, Zaporozhets, and ten other subordinate staff, received surprisingly light sentences of 2 to 3 years' imprisonment for alleged negligence, but in 1937 they were all (except for F. T. Fomin) reportedly shot; however, *Lenin i VChK*, p. 618 (edited by S. K. Tsvigun, KGB Deputy Chairman) puts his death at 1943.

Sources: Belov, pp. 267, 400; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 300; Viktorov, p. 63; *Osoboe zadanie*, p. 293; Orlov, pp. 19–20, 22, 28; Conquest, 1971, pp. 83, 93–5; *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 519, 618; photograph in *Osoboe zadanie*, p. 320.

MENZHINSKY, V. R.—see biographical sketch in Chapter XII.

MESSING, STANISLAV ADAMOVICH 1890–1946

Pole, son of musician, born in Warsaw into Jewish intelligentsia family, studied in gymnasium; 1908 joined SDKPiL; after one year's imprisonment in Warsaw, exiled abroad, going to Belgium; 1911 back to Warsaw; 1913–17 in Russian army; active in October Revolution in Moscow; 1918 secretary of Soviet executive committee, and chief of Cheka, in Sokolniki district of Moscow; Dec. 1918 appointed Collegium member of Moscow Cheka, and chief of its secret-operational department; June 1920 appointed deputy chairman, and Jan. 1921 chairman, of Moscow Cheka; meanwhile, in July 1920, confirmed as member of Vecheka Collegium; 8 Nov. 1921 Politburo decided his appointment as chairman of Petrograd Cheka; Oct. 1922 also commander GPU Troops, Petrograd Military Region; 1922–9 chief of Petrograd/Leningrad GPU/OGPU; 1929–31 Deputy Chairman of OGPU of USSR, as well as member of TsIK of USSR; 1930–4 member of Central Control Commission of Communist Party; 1932–4 Collegium member of People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade; 1934–7 chairman of Mongolian Chamber of Commerce; 26 July 1937 arrested; perished, but posthumously rehabilitated.

Sources: Lenin (5), Vol. LIV, p. 787; *Księga Polaków*, p. 565; *Spravochnik*

uchrezhdenii RSFSR, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 262; *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 521, 619; Alidin *et al*, pp. 306, 128 (photograph).

MOGILEVSKII, SOLOMON GRIGOREVICH 1885–1925

Born into Jewish merchant family; 1903 joined RSDRP; 1904 arrested, and, after release, emigrated; in Geneva sided with Bolsheviks; 1906 returned to Russia and engaged in revolutionary activity until 1908; 1914 joined Bolshevik Party; after February Revolution resumed revolutionary activity, member of Minsk Party Committee and Minsk Soviet; Apr. 1917 attended Seventh Party Conference; spring 1918 in Commissariat for Justice in Moscow; summer 1918 member of Saratov Soviet executive committee and Saratov Cheka; early 1919 to Kiev for NKIu work; late summer deputy chairman 12th Army Revolutionary Tribunal; Oct. 1919 chief of Moscow Cheka OO investigation section; later reportedly chief of Vecheka Foreign Department; 1922 onwards in Caucasus, Chairman of Transcaucasian Cheka; 18 Sept. 1923 appointed to OGPU Collegium; 22 Mar. 1925 killed in aircraft accident.

Sources: Proletarskaia revoliutsiia, June 1925, No. 6 (41), pp. 234–5; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 264; *Izvestiia*, 22 Sept. 1923; Alidin, p. 306.

MOROZ, GRIGORII SEMENOVICH 1893–1940

1917 joined Bolshevik Party; after October Revolution worked in Petrograd Defence Committee; Jan. 1918 appointed secretary of Vecheka Department for Combating Speculation, and later of Department for Territorial Liaison; Jan. 1919 appointed chief of Vecheka Instructional Department; by Dec. 1918 member of Vecheka Collegium, confirmed in office in Mar. 1919, but not in July 1920; June 1919 became chief of Vecheka Investigation Department; Dec. 1920 appointed Vecheka plenipotentiary representative in the Kirgiz Krai; 1922 onwards GPU plenipotentiary in the Ural; 1925–8 secretary of Communist Party's Control Commission for Moscow; subsequently Collegium member of People's Commissariat for Trade; chairman Central Committee of Trade Workers' Union; Mar. 1920 delegate for Moscow City Party Committee at Ninth Party Congress; Mar. 1922 at Eleventh Party Congress elected member of Party's Central Control Commission; perished in purges.

Sources: Who Was Who in the USSR, p. 395; *Rytsar revoliutsii*, p. 301; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 621.

PAVLUNOVSKII, IVAN PETROVICH 1888–1937 or 10 Feb. 1940

Born in Kursk Province into petty-bourgeois family; 1905 joined Bolshevik Party; active revolutionary; clerk in government office in Kursk; 1906/7 to 1910/11 in prison and exile in Nikolsk, near Vologda; 1911–14 in St. Petersburg in insurance work, often defending workers; 1914 secretary of health insurance fund at Putilov Works, where he acted as a Bolshevik Party organiser; 1914 or 1915 called up for army service; according to Budarin, p. 85, he completed an ensigns' training course at Peterhof, and served as second lieutenant in guards regiment in Petrograd and Tsarskoe Selo; after February Revolution the regiment elected him chairman of its revolutionary committee and its delegate to the Petrograd Soviet; during October Revolution active in Petrograd MRC; commanded regiment in defeat of General Kornilov; directed siege of Vladimir Officer Cadet College; 1918 chief of Special Department (OO) of 5th Army on eastern front; after capture of Ufa, chairman of Ufa Gub-Cheka; 1919 deputy to chairman (Dzerzhinsky) of Vecheka Special Department (OO); Jan. 1920 onwards Vecheka/OGPU plenipotentiary in Siberia and (1926) in the Caucasus; 1927 member of OGPU Collegium; from Feb. 1930, USSR People's Deputy Commissar for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; Nov. 1930 Deputy Chairman of USSR VSNKh; at Fifteenth Congress (Dec. 1927) and Sixteenth Congress (June 1929) elected member of Party Central Control Commission; at Seventeenth Congress (Jan. 1934) elected candidate-member of Party Central Committee.

Sources: Budarin, pp. 85–6, footnote; *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, pp. 210–11; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 439; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 217; *Lenin i VChK*, pp. 625, 322–3; photograph in *Geroi Oktiabria*, Vol. II, p. 210.

PETERS, Ia. Kh.—see biographical sketch in Chapter XII, pp. 266–8.

REDENS, STANISLAV FRANTSEVICH 1892–1938

Born into Polish workman's family in Minsk Mazowiecki, Tsarist Poland; 1902 onwards in Russia; apprentice, then worker, in Dnepr Metallurgical Plant in Kamenskoe, Ekaterinoslav Province; Aug. 1914 joined Bolshevik Party; 1917 secretary of SDKPiL group at Kamenskoe; Apr. 1918 to Moscow; July 1918–1919/20 personal secretary to Dzerzhinsky at Moscow Cheka and Vecheka; deputy chief of Foreign Department of Ukrainian Cheka; Jan. 1920–Jan. 1921 chairman of Odessa Cheka; Jan.–July 1921 chairman of Crimean Cheka; head of Administrative-Organisational Administration of Vecheka; 1922–4 chairman of Crimean GPU; 1924–6 secretary to Dzerzhinsky at

VSNKh; 1926–7 in People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; next in Party's Central Control Commission; 1929 chairman of Georgian GPU; 1932–Feb. 1933 chairman of Ukrainian GPU; 1934 member of Party's Central Control Commission; 1935–7 member of USSR Central Executive Committee; 1935 appointed Commissar 1st Class of State Security; 11 July 1937 awarded Order Of Lenin; 1937–8 (?) head of Moscow NKVD; 1938 head of NKVD in Kazakhstan; 1938 arrested and perished; 1961 rehabilitated; his wife, Anna Allilueva, sister of Stalin's second wife, Nadezhda, was herself arrested in 1948, being released after Stalin's death, broken in mind.

Sources: Księga Polaków, p. 713 (some of this information contradicts other material, and may be inaccurate); Orlov, p. 221; *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 215; Golichenko, 1966, p. 101; Allilueva, 1967, pp. 57–63, 65; Allilueva, 1969, pp. 156, 351–3; Conquest, 1985, pp. 80–1; group photograph in *Osoboe zadanie*, p. 320.

SAMSONOV, TIMOFEI PETROVICH 1888–1955 or 1956

Working class background; belonged to Anarchist-Communist Party; repeatedly arrested by Okhrana; was in America; during October Revolution took part in rising of railway workers in Cheliabinsk; elected to Cheliabinsk Soviet; 1918 investigator and instructor in Military Control (military counter-espionage service) of 3rd Army on eastern front; Jan. 1919 appointed chief of Special Department (OO) of 3rd Army; Feb. 1919 joined Communist Party; May 1919 made head of Moscow Cheka's OO and, in June, member of Moscow Cheka Collegium; Sept. 1919–20 served in Red Army; Sept. 1920 appointed to Vecheka Collegium and chief of Vecheka Secret Department, which he headed until 1924; awarded Order of Red Banner for services in suppression of Tambov Rebellion in 1921; 1924 went to work under Dzerzhinsky in VSNKh; later worked in apparatus of Communist Party's Central Committee.

Sources: Samsonova, pp. 149–56; Alidin *et al.*, pp. 154–5; Bezpalov, pp. 40, 65, 85, 94; Dan, p. 237; Aronson, 1924, p. 209; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 634; Alidin *et al.*, pp. 154–5, 307, and photograph p. 128.

SKRYPNIK, NIKOLAI ALEKSEEVICH 1872–1933

Ukrainian, son of railway official; studied at St. Petersburg Technological Institute; 1898 joined RSDRP; after 1903 split, sided with Lenin; as from 1901 many arrests and periods of exile, both abroad and within Tsarist Empire; July 1917, at Sixth Party Congress, elected candidate-member of Party Central Committee; 21 Nov. (4 Dec.) 1917 made member of short-lived five-man Com-

mission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage; Jan. 1918 at First Congress of Ukrainian Soviets appointed People's Commissar for Labour, and then for Commerce and Industry; Mar. 1918 Chairman of Ukrainian Soviet Government and Ukrainian People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, but Ukraine swiftly occupied by German troops; in 1918 seconded to Vecheka, in which he became Collegium member and chief of Department for Combating Counter-Revolution; 31 Aug. interrogated Lenin's assailant, Fanny Kaplan; fought in Civil War; 1919 head of OO on the south-east (Caucasian) front; Ukrainian People's Commissar for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; July 1921 Ukrainian People's Commissar for Internal Affairs; 1922–7 Ukrainian People's Commissar for Justice, and Ukrainian Procurator-General; 1927–33 Ukrainian People's Commissar for Education; 1925–33 member of Ukrainian Politburo; Feb. 1933 Deputy Chairman of Ukrainian Sovnarkom; 7 July 1933 committed suicide when policy of Ukrainisation of Ukraine abandoned in favour of Russification; 1956 rehabilitated.

Sources: Granat (7), Vol. XLI, Part III, cols. 47 *et seq.*; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 517; Peters, 1924, p. 21; Volkovicher, p. 282.

TRILISSER, MIKHAIL (ORIGINALLY MEIER) ABRAMOVICH
1883–1940

Jew, born in Astrakhan; gymnasium education in Odessa; 1901 joined RSDRP; led life of professional revolutionary, arrested, imprisoned, exiled; 1905 to St. Petersburg; 1906 took part in Sveaborg rising; 1907 arrested; 1909–14 hard labour in Schlüsselburg Fortress; 1914 exiled to Siberia; after February Revolution, secretary of Irkutsk Soviet; 1917–21, active in Party and Soviet capacities in Siberia, where he fought in Civil War; Mar. 1921, attended Tenth Party Congress, thereafter worked in Central Committee apparatus; 5 Aug. 1921–9 served in political police as chief of Foreign Department; in 1926 additionally appointed Second Deputy Chairman of OGPU; late 1929 made People's Deputy Commissar of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; 1935 transferred to Comintern, serving under alias M. A. Moskvin in charge of Comintern's secret apparatus and finances; elected member of Comintern's Executive Committee, and later of its Presidium; at Fifteenth (Dec. 1927) and Sixteenth (June 1930) Party Congresses elected member of Party Central Control Commission; shot 2 Feb. 1940; since rehabilitated.

Sources: Ioganson, *passim; Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 549; Orlov, pp. 256–60 (but includes misleading hearsay evidence regarding Yagoda's party membership); Agabekov, 1930, *passim*; Conquest, 1985, pp. 99, 136, 188.

UNSHLIKHT, I. S.—see biographical sketch in Chapter XII, p. 271.

URALOV (KISLIAKOV), SERGEI GERASIMOVICH 1893–1969

Born in the Urals; attended Saratov technical institute; 1914 joined Bolshevik Party; engaged in Party activity in Saratov and in the Urals; twice arrested for spreading propaganda; took part in October Revolution as member of Petrograd MRC; Assistant Commissar for Press Matters in Petrograd; 1918 joined Vecheka; 1919 chief of Vecheka Secret Department; by Mar. 1919 member of Vecheka Collegium; late Dec. 1919 appointed chairman of Omsk Cheka, and Vecheka plenipotentiary for Siberia; 1920 secretary of Vecheka; subsequently worked in Party and Soviet supervision and inspection organs; participated in 1941–5 war; author of biography of Uritskii, published 1929.

Sources: Geroi Oktiabria, Vol. II, pp. 515–16 (with photograph); *Rytsar revoliutsii*, p. 332 (also author of article pp. 141–50); Belov, p. 267; Budarin, p. 64, footnote; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 643.

URITSKII, M. S.—see biographical sketch in Chapter XII, p. 268.

VALOBUEV, KONSTANTIN MAKSIMOVICH 1879–1942

1899 onwards in Tsarist army, rising to colonel; 1917 organised Red Guard units in Briansk; 1918 joined Bolshevik Party; chief of staff on western front; April 1918 appointed military commissar of Tambov Province; June 1918 during Tambov mutiny captured and condemned to death but rescued; Oct. 1918 chief of staff of Vecheka Troops; by Mar. 1919 member of Vecheka Collegium; May 1919–Apr. 1920 commander of VOKhR Troops; Sept.–Dec. 1919 chief of operational staff of committee for defence of Moscow; Apr. 1920 to Red Army Academy; subsequently chief of staff of 9th and then 14th Army, and of Kronstadt Fortress; 1923 onwards in administrative posts, directing various plants and trusts; 1935 assigned to Osoaviakhim; 31 Mar. 1942 died of war wounds.

Sources: Iakovlev *et al.*, pp. 177, 675; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 585; Belov, pp. 266–7; Tishkov, pp. 28–9; photograph in Tsybov, p. 22.

VOROBEV, IAKOV ZINOVEVICH (ALIAS KOTS) 1885–1919

Jew, son of a veterinary doctor in Belaia Tserkov, in Kiev Province; from 1902 Anarchist activity; several arrests; 1906–8 in exile; 1908 joined Bolshevik Party; lived in Odessa, in Belaia Tserkov, and spent 5 years in exile in Siberia until 1915; 1918–Sept. 1919 chairman of Nizhnii Novgorod Provincial Cheka since its inception, except for 3

months in early 1919 when he resigned because of public criticism of his Cheka—but reinstated by Party; Sept. 1919 volunteered for duty in the Ukraine, and on his way south killed by Denikin's troops.

Sources: Granat (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, col. 90; Nicolaevsky, 1965, pp. 232, 236, footnote; obituary by his widow, Roza Vorobeva, in *Materialy po istorii revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia*, Illarionov (editor), Nizhnii Novgorod, 1922, pp. 20–5.

VOROSHILOV, KLIMENT EFREMOVICH 1881–1969

Born in Ukraine, son of railway watchman; 1903 joined RSDRP; 1904 member of Bolshevik Party Committee in Lugansk; participated in 1905 Revolution as chairman of Lugansk Soviet; delegate to Fourth (1906) and Fifth (1907) RSDRP Congresses; 1908–17 underground revolutionary activity, arrests, and exile; 1917 delegate to Seventh Conference (Apr.) and Sixth Congress (July) of Bolshevik Party; in late Nov. moved from Lugansk to Petrograd, where appointed chairman of Commission for the Security of Petrograd; Dec. 1917 appointed to Vecheka Collegium, but late Feb. 1918 went to Ukraine, taking command of 5th Red Army which retreated to Tsaritsyn; associated with Stalin in defence of Tsaritsyn, commanding 10th Army; owing to conflict with Trotsky, transferred to Ukraine where served as deputy commander and Military Council member on southern front; Dec. 1918 People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of Ukraine, commander of Kharkov Military District, and of 14th Army; 1919 one of organisers of First Cavalry Army, with which he fought in 1920 war against Poland; Mar. 1921 at Tenth Party Congress elected to Central Committee; led group of Congress delegates in storming of Kronstadt; 1921–4 commander of Military Districts in North Caucasus and Moscow; 1925 appointed Commissar for War; 1926 Politburo member; presided over reorganisation of army, becoming, in 1935, the first Marshal of the Soviet Union; survived Stalin's sweeping purge of Red Army; May 1940 Deputy Chairman of Defence Committee; in 1941–5 war initially commander on Leningrad front, but soon relieved of operational command and transferred to State Defence Committee; 1945 head of Soviet Control Commission in Hungary; 1946–53 Deputy Chairman of Council of Ministers; Mar. 1953–May 1960 Chairman of Supreme Soviet Presidium; 1926–July 1960 member of Politburo (1952 renamed Presidium) of Party Central Committee; criticised by Khrushchev at Twentieth (1956) and Twenty-Second (1961) Party Congresses; 1960 divested of high State and Party offices.

Sources: Granat (7), Vol. XLI, Part I, cols. 93–7, *BSE* (3), Vol. V (1971), cols. 1101–2; Akshinskii, pp. 53–5; Erickson, pp. 846–7; Khatskevich, 1965, p. 205.

YAGODA, GENRIKH GRIGOREVICH 1891–1938

A Jew,[1] probably born in Tsarist Poland,[2] son of an artisan; received a middle-grade education, becoming a statistician; grew up in Nizhnii Novgorod,[3] as a protégé of Iakov Sverdlov, whose niece, Ida née Averbakh, he married, apprenticed in Sverdlov family's engraving workshop;[4] 1904–5 as a youth helped to operate an underground printing press[5] (presumably the one organised by Sverdlov in 1903)[6] in Nizhnii Novgorod, where he joined the RSDRP in 1907; 1911 arrested in Moscow, spent 2 years in exile; *c.* 1913–1915 employed in health insurance fund of Putilov Works in Petrograd; 1915 drafted for army, serving until end of 1916; 1917 active in Bolshevik Party's Military Organisation,[7] helping to organise the Red Guard in Petrograd; briefly edited *Soldatskaia Pravda*;[8] 1918 appointed Commandant of Moscow through Sverdlov's influence;[9] 1918–19 served in Military Inspection organs on southern and eastern fronts;[10] 1919–22 member of Collegium of Commissariat of Foreign Trade;[11] simultaneously in Vecheka, figuring by Jan. 1920 as administrative Director of Vecheka's Special Department (OO);[12] 29 July 1920 confirmed as member of Vecheka Collegium;[13] 30 Dec. 1920 co-signatory (as administrative director of entire Vecheka) with Dzerzhinsky of a Vecheka instruction;[14] Sept. 1923 appointed OGPU Second Deputy Chairman,[15] under Dzerzhinsky and Menzhinsky; 1926–34 OGPU First Deputy Chairman, under Menzhinsky (who died 5 May 1934), except for brief period in 1931 when Ia. A. Akulov was brought into OGPU by Stalin to outrank him; with other OGPU leaders disapproved Stalin's collectivisation policy, productive of peasant uprisings; named with Trilisser in memorandum of Bukharin-Kamenev secret conversation of 11 July 1928 as sympathetic to the Right Opposition; leaking of memorandum led to Trilisser's transfer from OGPU, but Yagoda stayed;[16] July 1934–Sept. 1936 Chairman of NKVD; Nov. 1935 promoted Commissar General of State Security;[17] had overall responsibility for reprisals and purges after murder of Kirov on 1 Dec. 1934; Aug. 1936 stage-managed first Moscow show trial, followed by execution of Zinoviev and Kamenev; Sept. 1936 replaced by Yezhov and transferred to Commissariat for Commucations; Apr. 1937 arrested; Mar. 1938 defendant in third Moscow trial, alongside Bukharin, Rykov, Krestinskii; sentenced to death, executed;[18] 1930, at Sixteenth Party Congress, elected candidate-member, and 1934 at Seventeenth Party Congress, full member, of VKP(b) Central Committee.[19] Not rehabilitated, and unmentionable in USSR. *Note:* The NKVD defector, Alexander Orlov, generally a

very reliable reporter, misleadingly stated that Trilisser established that Yagoda had falsified his Party record, having joined the Bolshevik Party only in summer 1917,[20] but had this been true, then both Sverdlov and Pavlunovskii (a leading Bolshevik Party organiser at the Putilov Works and secretary of its health insurance fund while Yagoda was employed there—and later a prominent Chekist) would certainly have exposed Yagoda's fabrication.

Sources: (1) Bajanov, p. 179; Essad-Bey, p. 169; Gul, p. 166; see also p. 413 n. 61 above; (2) Lewytzkyj, p. 90; Gul, p. 166; peculiarly, Yagoda's *BSE* biography omits his birthplace; (3) *BSE* (1), Vol. LXV (1931), col. 336; (4) Bajanov, pp. 89, 208; Nicolaevsky, 17 Feb. 1958, p. 24; (5) *BSE, loc. cit.*; see also references to Yagoda in Conquest, 1985, Index, p. 222. (6) *Granat* (7), Vol. XLI, part III, col. 15; (7) *BSE, loc. cit.*; (8) *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 600; (9) Nicolaevsky, *loc. cit.*; E.-H. Carr, 1959, p. 456, footnote 3; (10) *BSE, loc. cit.*; (11) *Lenin i VChK*, p. 652; (12) *Spravochnik uchrezhdenii RSFSR*, 22 I 1920, p. 217; (13) *Lenin i VChK*, p. 396; (14) Latsis, 1921, p. 62; (15) *Izvestiia*, 22 Sept. 1923; (16) Wolin & Slusser, pp. 14–15, 43–5, 378; (17) *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 600; (18) Wolin & Slusser, pp. 17–18, 46, 380; (19) *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 600; (20) Orlov, pp. 259–60. Yagoda's photograph figures in Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p. 83, and *BSE, loc. cit.* See also references to Yagoda in Conquest, 1985, Index, p. 222.

ZAKS, GRIGORII D. 1882–1937

Presumably Jewish; 1905 elected to Central Committee of SR Party, becoming an LSR when SR Party split in late 1917, following the Bolshevik October *coup*, Zaks and Uritskii administered the MRC Presidium; with Stuchka, Zaks also administered the MRC's legal and investigative department; 6 Nov. appointed, with Stuchka, as joint head of the legal department of VTsIK; 9 Dec. appointed People's Deputy Commissar for Education; Mar. 1918 appointed co-Deputy Chairman (with Aleksandrovich) of the Vecheka; 6 July 1918 opposed LSR Rising, though Lenin mistakenly ordered his arrest; co-founder of Populist Communist Party; Nov. 1918 joined Bolshevik Party; fought in Civil War; thereafter in military and administrative work; perished in purges.

Sources: Chugaev, Vol. III, p. 663; *Protokoly zasedanii VTsIK II*, p. 34; Iroshnikov, p. 243; *Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti*, Vol. I, p. 586; Gorodetskii, p. 297; Lenin (5), Vol. XXXV, p. 518, Vol. L, p. 527; Schapiro, 1955, p. 182; *Who Was Who in the USSR*, p. 621; *Lenin i VChK*, p. 597.

Appendix C

Deaths Attributable to the Chekas

The Chekas contributed signally to the consolidation of Soviet power, but at a terrible cost. To reckon that cost accurately in terms of human lives would be an impossible task; at most one can attempt the broadest of estimates. No pertinent comprehensive official statistics are available; the semi-official figures presented by Latsis are neither complete nor dependable. Nor is the contemporary Soviet press a reliable guide. True, it was declared Soviet policy to publicise the terror: the decree of 5 September 1918 required that the names of those executed should be published, stating the reasons for their execution; however, in practice not only the names of the victims, but even the occurrence of executions very frequently remained undisclosed.[1] The émigré press, for its part, was given to unverifiable and sensational reporting; nevertheless, certain émigré publications, such as Melg(o)unov's *The Red Terror in Russia* (London, 1925) and Chernov's *Che-Ka* (Berlin, 1922), as well as the *Denikin Commission Reports* stand out as essential sources in chronicling Cheka atrocities. Unfortunately, some of Melgunov's supporting materials, as also the central collection of the many reports issued by General Denikin's Special Commission to Investigate Bolshevik Crimes, are no longer available in the West.[2]

EXECUTIONS IN THE RSFSR

The only published Soviet statistics regarding Cheka executions are the semi-official ones provided by Latsis, limited to the RSFSR over the period 1918–20. Latsis produced three sets of figures:

(1) For the period 1918–July 1919, covering only twenty provinces of central Russia:

1918	*1919 (up to July)*	*Total*
6,300	2,089	8,389[3]

(2) For the whole period 1918–19:

1918	*1919*	*Total*
6,185	3,456	9,641[4]

(3) For the whole period 1918–20:

January–June 1918	*July–December 1918*	*1918–20*
22	more than 6,000	12,733[5]

Some of Latsis's figures appear to be decidedly understated. His total of 6,300 executions for 1918, for instance, cannot be adequate: the Petrograd Cheka alone accounted for 500 hostages shot between 30 August and 3 September (even before the Red Terror decree), and for a total of 800 by mid-October.[6] Moreover, even if we accept 8,389 as a valid figure for only twenty provinces of central Russia[7] over the period 1918–July 1919, then, as Chamberlin rightly pointed out, 'it is simply impossible to believe that the Cheka only put to death 12,733 people in all of Russia up to the end of the civil war'.[8]

One could recite a long catalogue of large-scale Cheka executions reported from various sources (not all of them necessarily accurate) and still be left to guess how many more such episodes, occurring over the vast territory of Russia, went unrecorded. Here we shall quote, by way of illustration, just a few of the more striking incidents: after the White Army's capture of Tsaritsyn, in June 1919, the Denikin Commission established that up to 5,000 executions had been carried out locally by the Bolsheviks;[9] some 1,500 persons were reportedly shot in Saratov during 1918–19;[10] in January 1920, on the eve of the (temporary and incomplete) abolition of capital punishment, 300 prisoners were executed in Moscow, 400 in Petrograd, and many more elsewhere;[11] many thousands were similarly shot throughout the country during the Civil War in order to pre-empt the periodic amnesties, or when 'evacuating' prisons in the face of approaching White forces;[12] draconic reprisals were carried out by Kedrov's punitive expedition in northern Russia after the defeat of General Miller's White Army in February 1920.[13] The carnage continued after the Civil War: over the period 1920–2, regular mass exterminations by shooting or by drowning in barges (a convenient method, much favoured by the Chekas)[14] on the River Dvina took place near two concentration camps, Kholmogory and Pertominsk in Archangel Province; the victims (who included countless White Army prisoners, 2,000 Kronstadt rebels and many thousands of insurgents captured in Tambov Province, in the Ukraine, and in Siberia) reputedly numbered around 100,000,[15] and certainly ran into several scores of thousands.

EXECUTIONS IN THE UKRAINE AND THE CRIMEA

Latsis's statistics did not embrace the Ukraine, although he himself had headed the All-Ukrainian Cheka from April 1919 until Denikin's

occupation of Ukrainian territory later in the year. The Ukrainian Chekas, substantially assisted by Russian Chekists, were responsible for massive executions: at least 1,300[16] and possibly as many as 2,200[17] persons were shot in Odessa before it fell to the Whites on 23 August 1919; some 3,000 prisoners[18] (another source indicated several times that number)[19] were executed prior to 31 August by the Chekas of Kiev. Chamberlin quotes an official Soviet document stating that 3,879 persons were executed by Ukrainian Chekas during 1920, with the Odessa Cheka in first place, scoring 1,418 executions, and the Kiev Cheka next, scoring 538.[20] The terrible reprisals carried out in the Crimea, following the defeat of Wrangel in November 1920, attained huge proportions. Melgunov quotes some horrifying but undocumented figures: the Balaklava and Sevastopol Chekas between them reputedly shot 29,000 persons,[21] whilst the total number executed in the Crimea during this period was variously estimated at between 50,000 and 150,000.[22] Such astronomical statistics are hard to credit, but then so were the first estimates of Stalin's millions of victims in the thirties.

DEATHS IN SUPPRESSION OF INSURRECTIONS IN THE RSFSR AND UKRAINE

Besides these deliberate executions, very many thousands more perished in the course of insurrections, although here it is not easy to distinguish between deaths brought about by the Chekas and by VOKhR/VNUS (the latter included Cheka troops, and stood effectively under Vecheka command) and, on the other hand, by the Red Army and CHON, which were likewise involved in putting down rebellions. Latsis recorded the suppression by the Chekas, within just twenty provinces of central Russia, of 245 risings during 1918 and 99 more in the first seven months of 1919, causing the death of 3,057 rebels;[23] this seems an extraordinarily low casualty figure considering that, in the single month of March 1919, serious industrial unrest, peasant revolt, and army mutiny came to the boil in localities both inside and outside the central provinces of Russia. On 12 March, 5,000 soldiers of the 34th and 35th regiments stationed in Briansk mutinied; among units quelling the mutiny were Vecheka troop detachments from Moscow and Kaluga, and the Smolensk Cheka battalion. Local Cheka troops took part in the suppression of a whole series of *kulak* insurrections in the provinces of Samara and Simbirsk during 11–13 March.[24] In Astrakhan, several thousand workers and Red Army mutineers were massacred during 10–11 March—the Chekist, Atarbekov, distinguished himself here.[25]

Moreover, Latsis reported that more than 5,000 members of the Vecheka and of its armed detachments (and up to 2,000 members of the Ukrainian Cheka) perished during the period 1918—July 1919;[26] these losses must have been sustained in the suppression of rebellions, leading to the absurd conclusion that in the RSFSR nearly twice as many well-armed Chekists were killed as the rebels (most of them peasants) they were suppressing.

Peasant insurrection was particularly prevalent during 1920–1 and was cruelly suppressed, as in the Kuban Cossack region in the autumn of 1920 by the Vecheka plenipotentiary, Lander.[27] We have noted that the Chekas of the RSFSR reported 118 risings in February 1921; between 40,000 and 50,000 peasant rebels participated in the Tambov revolt at its peak. Anarchic peasant revolt and nationalist insurrection occurred on a vast scale in the Ukraine, over whose wide territories there also swept the tides of civil war and Polish invasion: contemporary (but partisan and doubtless exaggerated) estimates suggested that some 200,000 peasants were killed by the Reds (a large proportion through Cheka action) in the course of Makhno's insurrection in 1918–21.[28]

CASUALTIES CAUSED BY CHEKAS IN OTHER SOVIET REPUBLICS

Nominally independent Soviet Socialist Republics were unsuccessfully launched in Latvia, Lithuania, and Belorussia in 1919, and were actually established in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia (invaded by the Red Army respectively in late April 1920, early December 1920, and mid-February 1921). Wherever Soviet power spread, local republican Chekas took root and stamped out opposition; sometimes, as in the Turkestan Autonomous Republic, where the Basmachi rebellion persisted, this necessitated commitment of substantial Cheka troops[29] over a prolonged period and involved significant loss of life. In January 1919, several thousand persons were reportedly executed in Cheka reprisals for the Osipov revolt in Turkestan.[30] The Chekist defector Dumbadze personally witnessed the Georgian Cheka's execution of just a single batch of 118 persons,[31] and he reported the wholesale execution of hundreds of members of the bourgeoisie, seized following the Red Army's incursion into Azerbaijan.[32]

OVERALL ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF CHEKA VICTIMS

Surveying the available evidence and allowing both for exaggeration by witnesses and for all the slaughter that must have gone unreported, one is led to surmise that the total number of victims of the massive

Cheka apparatus and Internal Security Troops throughout Soviet-controlled territory, over the four-year period December 1917–February 1922, may have been in the region of 280,000, of whom perhaps half perished through execution and half in the suppression of insurrection. This figure is broadly in line with certain other estimates. Vladimir Brunovskii, an agronomist employed in senior Soviet administrative posts,[33] and himself an OGPU prisoner during 1923–6, reported that in the opinion of top Communist Party circles, the Vecheka had been responsible for 'not less than 250,000 and not more than 300,000 deaths'.[34] Although Brunovskii referred here specifically to the Vecheka, he probably meant to include the other republican Chekas in this assessment, which presumably covered deliberate executions as well as deaths incurred in insurrections.

The acknowledged expert on Soviet Russia, Robert Conquest (the accuracy of whose 1968 estimate of the millions of victims of Stalin's Great Terror of the thirties has been strikingly borne out by subsequent evidence from the USSR), has estimated in a report submitted to a subcommittee of the United States Senate's Committee on the Judiciary, that official executions during 1917–23 (i.e. in Lenin's lifetime) accounted for a minimum of 200,000 lives which, if added to the numbers perishing in rebellions or as a result of prison and camp treatment, would (Conquest contended) make a total of 500,000 victims.[35] This total, however, goes beyond the period of the Vecheka, and includes deaths at other hands than those of the Chekas: we know that the various Revolutionary Tribunals handed out death sentences liberally, whilst the Red Army was constantly, and sometimes heavily (as in the Ukraine, in Kronstadt and in Tambov Province), engaged in suppressing insurrection throughout Soviet territory.

W. H. Chamberlin, historian of the Russian Revolution, when giving his 'reasonable and probably moderate estimate' of 'about fifty thousand persons put to death in the course of the Red Terror during the period of the civil war', specifically excluded 'insurgents who were shot down with arms in their hands'; the inclusion of the latter category would have greatly increased his modest count. However, as Chamberlin rightly emphasised, 'any estimate, in view of the lack of reliable data, must be highly conjectural and approximate'.[36] The Soviet conspiracy of silence, noted by Chamberlin regarding the Crimean massacres at the turn of 1920/1,[37] illustrates the difficulties of accurately assessing the carnage committed by the Chekas.

ESTIMATE OF EXECUTIONS UNDER TSARIST RULE

It is instructive to compare the number of executions occurring during the preceding half-century, in the time of the Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery (founded in 1826) and of the 'Okhrana' (founded in 1880), always bearing in mind that these Tsarist security agencies did not themselves have authority to sentence or execute. There are various conflicting and overlapping computations of executions under Tsarist rule,[38] but for an overall statement we can turn again to Conquest who, drawing exclusively on Soviet sources, concludes that the highest possible figure of executions that can be deduced from these sources for the period 1866–1917 is one of about 14,000.[39] There were only 94 executions from 1866 to 1900,[40] a period notable for nearly 40 assassinations (including that of Alexander II) by revolutionaries; the overwhelming preponderance of executions resulted from the revolution of 1905 and from the ensuing political assassinations which caused about 1,400 deaths in 1906 and 3,000 in 1907. If we accept Conquest's figures, then a comparison arises between the 14,000 executions of the Tsarist half-century up to 1917 and, on the other hand, Conquest's estimate of at least 200,000 executions under Lenin, from October 1917 to the end of 1923. Conquest further considers that, added together, deaths by execution, through imprisonment, and through anti-Semitic pogroms over the last fifty years of Tsarist rule can at the very most have totalled 25,000[41]—a sum to be set against his estimate of 500,000 deaths owing to execution, imprisonment, and insurrection in the six sanguinary years under Lenin.

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Established by Lenin just six weeks after the *coup* of October 1917, the Cheka was Soviet Russia's first political police organization. This closely documented study chronicles its emergence as a vast, ubiquitous, and all-purpose apparatus for the suppression of internal opposition. Answerable solely to the Central Committee of the Communist party as its 'special organ of merciless summary justice', aspiring to security surveillance over the whole of society, the Cheka set the scene for the totalitarian police state of the twentieth century.

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